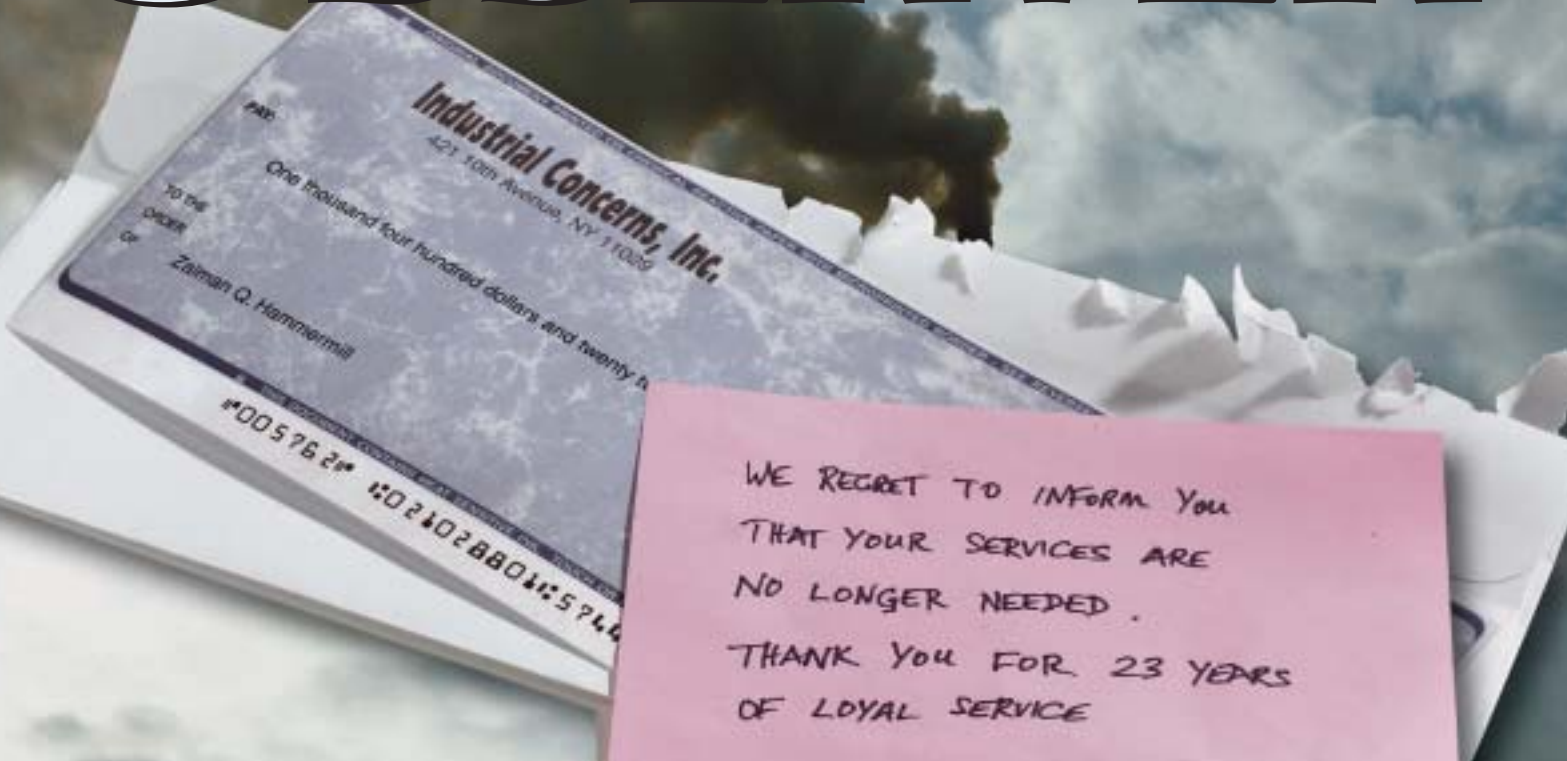



# THE Jewish OBSERVER

Tammuz 5763 • June 2003  
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## The Toughest Job of All: *Not having one.*

Also in This Issue:  
**HOPE IN THE SEASON  
OF SUFFERING**

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# Tzipisa LiYeshua

## Genuine Yearning, Our Merit For Bringing The Geula

### THE SEEDS OF MOSHIACH

In the daily *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say: “*Es tzemach David avdecha meheira satzmi’ach* – The offspring of David, Your servant, may You speedily cause to flourish.” The *Midrash*<sup>1</sup> explains that when a “*tzomei’ach*,” vegetation, is planted, the seed lies completely concealed beneath the ground. It is only when the seed eventually sprouts and flourishes that its existence becomes evident and its hidden potential realized.

The *beracha* “*Es Tzemach David*” refers to the “sprouting” of the *geula*, because the process is as slow and gradual as that of a growing plant. One who continuously watches over a plant will not notice it developing. Yet, over time, it becomes obvious that the plant did indeed grow. Similarly, we are no more able to perceive how each difficult period of Jewish history, including our current long *galus*, con-

Rabbi Kleinman is a co-founder of the Hakhel Public Lecture Program in Brooklyn and a member of the Commission on *Kedushas Bais Haknesses* of Agudath Israel of America. He is the author of the soon-to-be published *sefer*, *Ninety Days To Better Davening*. He is a frequent contributor to these pages.

tributes to the final redemption. We do not detect the extraordinary significance of events as they occur, but the seeds of the *geula* are already present, being nurtured by *Hashem*.

The *Yerushalmi* in *Yoma*<sup>2</sup> teaches that every generation in which the *Beis Hamikdash* was not rebuilt is considered to have caused its destruction. Does our generation truly have the ability to rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*? It is difficult to imagine so, considering that the *Beis Hamikdash* was not rebuilt during the many generations until now that included outstanding *tzaddikim*.

The *Beis Hamikdash*, however, is continuously in the process of being rebuilt through the merit of every Jew in *galus* over the generations, and its re-establishment will come as a result of their spiritual contributions throughout the thousands-years-long exile. The future *Beis Hamikdash* requires the bricks of each and every Jew – including yours and mine – and we therefore have both the ability and responsibility to contribute towards its rebuilding.

The question is: Will each of us be able to say that he truly did his utmost in this vital undertaking?

“ANI MA’AMIN BE’EMUNA SHELEIMA  
...B’CHOL YOM SHE’YAVO”

One of the Thirteen Principles of Faith concerns the coming of *Moshiach*: “I believe with complete faith in the coming of *Moshiach*, and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come.” The *Gemora*<sup>3</sup> teaches that when each one of us will have to give an account in the World-to-Come for his actions in this world, one of the questions will be “*Tzipisa liyeshua?*” Did you hope for the *yeshua*? Did you truly wait in hope every day for the coming of *Moshiach*? According to the *Arizal*,<sup>4</sup> the place in *davening* where one hopes for the *geula* is in the *beracha* “*Es Tzemach David*” when we say “*ki liyeshuas’cha kivinu kol hayom* – for we hope for Your salvation all the day.” Therefore, one should have *kavana* to fulfill the *mitzva* of *tzipisa liyeshua* when praying that the final redemption should come in our day.

We conclude “*Es Tzemach David*” by saying: “*ki liyeshuas’cha kivinu kol hayom* – we hope for Your salvation all the day.” Yet, when praying for forgiveness in “*Selach Lanu*” and for health in “*Refa’einu*,” we do not conclude with an



expression of hope, but simply with praise – “For You are the good and forgiving G-d,” and “For You are G-d, King, the faithful and compassionate healer.” What message should we take from the unusual ending in the *beracha* of “*Es Tzemach David*”?

Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshutz<sup>5</sup> comments that for the *geula* to come in our days, we must truly want it to take place. Particularly if we have no other merits, our yearning, in and of itself, creates the necessary merit. In this vein, the *Yalkut*<sup>6</sup> remarks that even if our actions do not merit the final redemption, it will come as a reward because “we hope for Your salvation.” Thus we say the words “*Ki liyeshuas’cha kivinu kol hayom*” because *Moshiach’s* coming is not dependent solely on *Hashem*, but on us – to the extent that we truly hope for it. If *Moshiach* still has not come in our time, perhaps it is because we do not really desire his arrival as we may profess. This point is poignantly brought out in the following story.<sup>7</sup>

*It was near the end of the Chofetz Chaim’s life and he was heartbroken over the terrible plight of the Jews in Russia. One Shabbos, with his disciples and family gathered around him, the Chofetz Chaim began to speak:*

*“There is only one real hope. Moshiach must come soon. It must happen sooner or later, but it is up to us to hasten his arrival. We must demonstrate our overwhelming desire for Moshiach. Why don’t we cry out to Hashem to help us? This is no time for silence! If the people are indifferent, then it is our duty to arouse them to cry out and pray for the final redemption.”*

*In a soft voice, as if talking to himself, the Chofetz Chaim added, “I must go to Reb Chaim Ozer in Vilna to discuss what to do!”*

*To the dismay of his family and students, the Chofetz Chaim began to plan his trip as soon as Shabbos ended. The Chofetz Chaim was over ninety years old and could scarcely leave his chair, let alone undertake such a lengthy journey. They feared that he might not even survive the trip and pleaded with him to abandon his plans, but to no avail. The goal, he said, was worthy of sacrificing one’s life. To help them understand his anxiety, the Chofetz Chaim recounted the following story:*

*When Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin left the city of Brisk, a delegation was sent to Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (the Beis Haleivi) inviting him to become their new Rav, but he refused.*

*They argued and pleaded, but nothing could persuade the Beis Haleivi to change his mind. Finally, in desperation, one of the Brisker Jews exclaimed, “Rebbe, twenty-five thousand Jews are waiting for you! How can you disappoint them?” The Beis Haleivi had no choice but to accept. His love for Klal Yisroel would not permit him to refuse the earnest entreaties of twenty-five thousand Jews.*

*The Chofetz Chaim continued, “Do we imagine that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is less sensitive than the Beis Haleivi? If this gadol could not disappoint the twenty-five thousand Jews of Brisk, surely Hashem Yisborach will not disappoint the millions of Jews who beg for the coming of Moshiach with all their hearts!”*

*“And that is why,” the Chofetz Chaim concluded, “I must go to Vilna to speak to Rav Chaim Ozer and help bring the final redemption.”*

How passionate must our thirst for the final redemption be to merit its coming? Rabbi Eibeshutz explains:

*“A Jew should shed tears without restraint when he recites the prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Beis Hamikdash within it, and for the Davidic dynasty. If we do not have*

Jerusalem and the reign of David's dynasty, then we do not have life in its fullest sense.

"If the angels above cry out and weep over the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, shouldn't we? Shouldn't we cry out over what, from our viewpoint, seems to be the disgrace of G-d's Name?"

"Every person is obliged to say in his heart, 'Behold, I am prepared to give my life to sanctify Your Name. If, in my lifetime, I am not worthy of seeing the building of the *Beis*

*Hamikdash*, and the restoration of Jerusalem and the Davidic dynasty, let me die for the sake of bringing it closer. My eyes want to see nothing but a greater realization of G-d in Jerusalem, with the Davidic dynasty, because my entire being yearns for the sanctification of Your Name."

If we sincerely want the final *geula* to appear in our days, we must diligently and vigorously pray for it to come with superior effort from the depths of our hearts.

#### TRULY YEARNING FOR GEULA: BONDING WITH HASHEM

Can we, in "*Galus America*," truly yearn for the *Geula*? In prior generations, Jews waited intensely for the *Geula's* imminent arrival. It was not difficult for them to genuinely anticipate and crave for *Moshiach*—due to both the persecution endured and the pronounced lack of material comforts. Particularly during the many difficult times in our history, such as the Crusades, the Inquisition, the rampages of Chmelnicki's Cossack marauders, the era of the Russian Czars, and more recently, the two traumatic World Wars, Jews felt an intense longing for *Moshiach's* long-awaited arrival.

At the end of World War I, people were again anticipating the arrival of *Moshiach*, only to witness the Holocaust, the great *churban* of European Jewry. With the liberation of the concentration camps by the Americans and Russians in 1945, Jews everywhere were sure that *Moshiach* would now arrive.<sup>8</sup>

However, life today in our present *galus* presents us with a unique challenge. *Baruch Hashem*, we live in the splendor and comfort of America with almost everything at our disposal and where items once considered luxuries have evolved into everyday necessities. Do we truly feel the need to greet *Moshiach*?

Even more troubling, the culture of America is infected with materialism and impurity to such a degree that spirituality and holiness are compelled to take a back seat. This *hester panim* severely intrudes on our ability to connect to and have a relationship with *Hashem*, Whose face is hidden from the world stage.

*Reb Mendel of Rimanov was once walking with his Chassidim and noticed a child sitting behind a tree, crying. The Rebbe asked, "Why are you crying, my child?" He replied, "We're playing hide and seek, and it's my turn to hide." The Rebbe said, "Is that a reason to cry?" The child looked up and wailed, "I'm hiding, but no one is looking for me! No one's interested in find-*

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ing me!”

The Rebbe turned to his Chasidim and exclaimed, “Do you all hear what this child is saying? ‘No one is looking for me, no one’s interested in finding me.’ Hashem feels the same way.”

#### CONNECTING IN OUR MIKDASH ME’AT

Millennia ago, Jews would travel great distances to bring sacrifices in the *Beis Hamikdash* and come close to Hashem. Chazal tell us that because we no longer merit having the Holy Temple, our *batei knessess* now serve as our *mikdash me’at* (miniature sanctuary), and our *tefillos* replace the *korbanos*.

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander זצ"ל,<sup>9</sup> late *Mashgiach* of the Ponevezh Yeshiva, explained that the word *Shechina*, from the phraseology “that which resides with you,” refers to the Jewish Nation’s connection and relationship with Hashem. Although Hashem is indeed omnipresent, one can be especially inspired to come closer to His Presence in places where additional *kedusha* exists.

If this is so, why is it so difficult for us to feel the *Shechina* in our *shuls* or *batei midrash*? Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger<sup>10</sup> draws a comparison with the sun, which beams its powerful glow from a distance of 93 million miles, yet we can still feel its warmth and benefit from its light as long as we place no obstacles in its path. Similarly, the *Shechina* beams an intense spiritual power during the times of *tefilla*, but we must place no obstacles in its path. If we remain open to feeling its sacredness, the “warmth and light” of the *Shechina* will then in turn be felt in our lives, especially when we stand before Hashem in prayer.

Furthermore, just as the natural light in a house increases and decreases according to the number and size of the windows and other apertures, so too does the influence of the *Shechina* on an individual vary. In a final parallel, the heat of the sun increases when shining directly opposite an object, and so should the *Shechina* be more strongly

felt when *davening Shemoneh Esrei*.

Rabbi Dessler<sup>11</sup> explains why some people do not feel the *Shechina*: “The limitation is with the receiver, since the windows of his heart are clouded with impurities.... The more one cleans them, the more light will enter.”

In order to truly feel the *Shechina*, however, one must do more than simply remove the obstacles placed in its path. The *passuk*<sup>12</sup> teaches that when Yaakov traveled from Be’er Sheva to Charan, he passed Beis El, which was Har HaMoria (the future site of the *Beis*

*Hamikdash*), but did not stop to pray. After arriving in Charan, however, Yaakov said, “Is it possible that I passed the place where my fathers prayed and I did not pray there?”<sup>13</sup> He immediately decided to return, whereupon a miracle occurred. In an instant, the distance to Har HaMoriah contracted, greatly shortening his journey.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it was only after Yaakov recognized that Avraham and Yitzchak brought about an abundance of holiness and sanctity there through their *tefillos*, and desired to come close to the holi-

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ness of the *Shechina* in that same place, that he was worthy of the miracle that enabled him to actually connect to the *Shechina* existing there.<sup>15</sup>

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz זצ"ל<sup>16</sup>, the Mirrer *Mashgiach*, explained that it is evident that Yaakov's eagerness to connect with the *Shechina* at the site of the future *Beis Hamikdash* was a key factor in the *zechus* of *Klal Yisroel* to build the *Beis Hamikdash* there generations later.

Har Hamoria forever became the site where our prayers are received and more easily accepted because of its extra holiness; it is no wonder, then, that it was chosen as the site of both the First and Second *Beis Hamikdash*. However, just as Yaakov was able to connect to the *Shechina* there only after he decided to seek *Hashem* through his *tefillos*, we too can more readily connect with the *Shechina* that exists in the place where we *daven* – our *Mikdash Me'at* – only if we decide to seek *Hashem* and connect with His Holiness. Surprisingly, perhaps, even when one *davens* in a *shul* that possesses intrinsic sanctity, one must first seek to “clean our polluted windows” and strive to connect with the *Shechina*, in order to feel its presence.

Similarly, to be able to want *Moshiach*, one must first connect with the *Shechina* that exists in the places where we *daven* – our own *Mikdash Me'at*.

**OVERCOMING HESTER PANIM**

If materialism and impurity so dominate spirituality and holiness in our daily lives, what hope do we have to genuinely desire the *geula*? In *Shemoneh Esrei* we say “*u'kedoshim b'chol yom y'halelucha sela*” – and holy ones praise You every day... which, according to *Abudraham* refers to *Klal Yisroel*. Rabbi Avigdor Miller explains that the recitation of “*Kedusha*” by a Jew is the means by which we ratify *Hashem's* purpose in creating the world, as well as our purpose in being Jewish. By praising *Hashem*, with holiness, we show that despite the abundance of materialism in our world, it is our mission in life to see *Hashem*,

through the veil of all our materialism, to bond with *Hashem* and to rise above the *hester panim*.<sup>17</sup>

When we accomplish that mission and see *Hashem* in our world, we in effect integrate His presence with the physical world, and bring to fruition the purpose of this world, which is to acknowledge that everything physical has a spiritual function.

*David Ha'melech* attempted to live his life with the awareness that *Hashem* is always before him<sup>18</sup>: "One thing I ask of *Hashem*, and that is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of *Hashem* all the days of my life." Could *David Ha'melech*, let alone any ordinary individual, really seek to dwell in the house of *Hashem* all the days of his life? What about one's need to earn a livelihood, provide sustenance for one's family, care for and nurture children, sleep, eat, etc.?

Rabbi Dessler remarks<sup>19</sup> that the purpose of receiving good and benevolence in this world is that they become "tools" to help us in our pursuit of sanctity: "It is surely, and only, for the sake of sanctity that these material and worldly interests exist, to be of assistance and support for spiritual ends and not for any other purpose."

*Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg almost never slept on a bed, to minimize the amount of sleep and have more time to study Torah. Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk once visited him and saw that Reb Shmelke was exhausted. When Reb Elimelech begged him to sleep in a bed, he agreed. Upon awakening, Reb Shmelke and Reb Elimelech sat down to study a difficult section in the Gemora. Reb Shmelke realized that his mind was fresher than it had been for some time, and commented, "I see that by sleeping well one can also serve Hashem."*<sup>20</sup>

On our level, we must see ourselves as standing in *Hashem's* presence – even when buying food in the supermarket – since our material possessions are also dedicated to serving *Hashem*. No mat-

ter if we are housewives, professionals or manual laborers, with the proper thought and intent, we can serve *Hashem* all day, every day.

*The Chofetz Chaim taught that even the most mundane activities contain great spiritual potential, if only we are aware of them. For example, one can pay the taxi driver at the end of a ride merely to avoid being arrested for not paying, or it can be done with the intention of fulfilling the Torah injunction to pay promptly for services rendered.*

*And the taxi driver himself can drive all day long to make a living, but he can also have in mind that he is enabling others to reach their destinations. Indeed, there is hardly an occupation or activity that does not involve benefit for others in some way, directly or indirectly.*

*Even an act which is by definition a mitzva, such as putting on tefillin or sitting in a sukka, can lose meaning if done by rote.*

The *Gemora*<sup>21</sup> tells us that Shmuel once said to Rabbi Yehuda: "Smart one! Grab and eat, grab and drink! The world that we are passing through is like a wedding." It is highly unlikely that Shmuel was training his disciple Rabbi Yehudah for a career in gluttony. Rather, he was exhorting him to be a "smart one," and to grab all the Torah and *mitzvos* he can

during his stay in this world, which is as fleeting as a wedding.

Life can be compared to a wedding, where one enjoys food and drink, music and dancing. But if one is a smart one, he will be thinking of the *mitzva* of rejoicing with the wedding couple, as well. Then, even the eating and drinking will be a *mitzva*.

#### PERSONALLY GREETING MOSHIACH

How does one develop the desire to truly yearn for this essential principle of faith? We must first connect with the *Shechina* that exists in the places where we *daven* – our own *Mikdash Me'at* – by removing the many obstacles in our way, and then making a conscious decision to seek *Hashem* and to

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embrace His Holiness. We should also endeavor to see ourselves as always standing in Hashem's presence wherever we are.

Isn't it time for us to finally end the *galus* and personally greet *Moshiach*? We

can accomplish our critical goal of bringing the final redemption if we but yearn for it to come today, and we can be comforted by the knowledge that this longing can actually bring about the *geula*. This will only happen, however,

if we truly feel, in the words of Rabbi Eibeshutz: "My eyes want to see nothing but a greater realization of G-d in Jerusalem, with the Davidic dynasty, because my entire being yearns for the sanctification of Your Name." ■

<sup>1</sup> Midrash Tehillim, Mizmor 18.

<sup>2</sup> Yoma 1:1.

<sup>3</sup> Shabbos 31a.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in many *sefarim* in the name of the *Ari z"l* (see *Megadim Chaddashim* on *Shabbos* 31a.). See *Shaarei Teshuva*, *Orach Chaim*, 118.

<sup>5</sup> *Sefer Yaaros D'vash*, Volume 1 on *beracha V'liyerushalayim*.

<sup>6</sup> *Shomer Emunim*, *Maamar Hageula*, Ch. 3. See also *Sefer Machaneh Yisroel*, *Shaar Ha'Acharon*, Ch.2.

How can an intense desire bring the *geula*? The *Rambam* in *Moreh Nevuchim* states that Hashem created the concept of *korbanos*, allowing Jews to bring animal sacrifices in the *Beis Hamikdash*, because they would be jealous when they would see gentiles offering sacrifices to their *avoda zara* idols. The *Ramban* in the beginning of *Vayikra* asks: How could that be? We know that *korbanos* have inherent value to Hashem, as the *passuk* says that *korbanos* are a *reiach ni'cho'ach* to Hashem. In addition, we know that *korbanos* were brought by Kayin and Hevel before idols existed.

Rav Tzaddok *Hakohein* in *Tzidkas Hatzaddik*,

*Os 42* explains that *avoda zara* and *tuma*, defilement, exist in this world, despite the fact that they are not real, because of the evil desire of those who pursue them. Offering sacrifices to their *avoda zara* endows the *avoda zara* with the power to exist and the ability to thrive, as we see the Torah uses the phrase "lirtzonchem tizbechuhu" in connection with *korbanos*, or *avoda*.

A person's yearning can create something through *avoda*. That is what the Jews envied when they would see gentiles offering sacrifices to their *avoda zara*. That, says Rav Tzaddok, is what the *Rambam* means when he states that Hashem created the concept of *korbanos* just because Jews would be envious of gentiles offering sacrifices to their *avoda zara*. In response, Hashem said, *I will give Jews this ability, avoda, which is called "lirtzonchem tizbechuhu," that their intense desire to want something through their avoda can create that which they long for, as if they are giving "rei'ach ni'cho'ach" to Hashem.*

Our prayers are in place of *korbanos*. As a result, our true yearning for the *geula* can provide the merit to bring about *Moshiach* in our time.

<sup>7</sup> *Reb Chaim Ozer*, by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman (*ArtScroll*), p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> *Selected Speeches*, Rav Shimon Schwab, Ch 1: "Waiting For *Moshiach*," January 1989.

<sup>9</sup> *Sefer Sifsei Chaim*, *Pirkei Emuna V'Hashgacha*, Vol. 1, p. 170, citing the *Ramchal*.

<sup>10</sup> *She'eilos U'Teshuvos Binyan Tzion*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, Vol. 3, p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> *Bereishis* 28,11.

<sup>13</sup> *Rashi*, *Bereishis* 28,17.

<sup>14</sup> *Chulin* 91b.

<sup>15</sup> See *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* Vol. 3, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> *Sefer Daas Chochma U'Mussar* Vol. 1, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> *The Art of Jewish Prayer*, by Rabbi Yitzchok Kirzner, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> *Tehillim* 27,4

<sup>19</sup> *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* Vol. 1 p. 5; see also *Rambam Hilchos Teshuva* 9,1

<sup>20</sup> *Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit*, Shmuel Himelstein, *ArtScroll* p. 42

<sup>21</sup> *Eiruvin* 54a, see *Rashi*. See also Rabbi Pesach J. Krohn, *Along the Maggid's Journey* p. 216

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# The TOUGHEST JOB OF ALL

The convergence of so many crises in world events, security in *Eretz Yisroel*, and social upheavals has prompted more than one *gadol* to suggest that we are on the threshold of the coming of *Moshiach*. Along with the other *chevlei leida* (painful symptoms) of *Moshiach*, we're told "Ein ben David ba ahd shetichleh pruta min ha'kis" – *Moshiach* will not arrive until every last penny has been spent (*Sanhedrin* 97a). Unfortunately, the trend toward this signpost is not hard to see. The financial markets have not recovered from the September 11th attacks, the Enron debacle, and the collapse of the computer industry. Consumer confidence has fallen, and the unemployment rate is climbing. We can only imagine the financial crunch this situation has caused for families and Torah institutions.



Not making ends meet is certainly a blow to a family's self-esteem. But not having a job is even tougher. How many of us know people who were recently laid off? People who have been looking for many months for a *parnassa*? How many of us are concerned that soon we may be out of a job, *rachmana litzlan*?

I am a former *kollel yungerman* who had been actively searching for a job for some ten months, when I wrote the lines that follow. (I finally began working a bit after Shavuot.)

It was not easy. But our heavenly *Mashgiach Pratti* (Providential Guide) had put me in that position, and I wanted to share some of my experiences and thoughts. The following are two letters that I wrote in the midst of my search. The first is to the unemployed person, and the second is to the Jewish community at large.

## DEAR MR. STILL-LOOKING:

Going through what you are enduring, I can commiserate with you. Whether you're going through financial hardship, receiving *na'hama d'chisufa* (handouts) from family and friends, or a bit of both, I know it's not easy.

I'm all too familiar with the lows of job searching. Long stretches with no interviews (and when we finally get a relevant interview, we are rejected), hours spent self-conscious at the library searching through the various company and job sites, going to networking events, struggling with whether we should settle for a job that we don't really want, struggling with whether or not

to work part time.... Ultimately, the downs are summed up in the fact that we still don't have jobs.

There's the feeling of inadequacy vis-a-vis our friends. Vis-a-vis our wives and family. And most importantly, vis-a-vis ourselves.

But it isn't as bad as I had thought it would be. Please allow me to share some ideas that may seem obvious, but they may be helpful when heard in this context.

### 1. Be Productive Now

While having a job fulfills the need of providing for our families and ourselves, it should not – and truly does not – provide the measure of a Jew. Properly dealing with not having a job is a much more

accurate measure. We know that throughout the centuries Jews have stood apart from their peers by their sacrifices to study Torah no matter what the cost in terms of physical comforts. They understood that the real measure of a person is how close he is to *Hashem*.

With that in mind, we can start to be productive now. We can't spend all day searching and sending resumes. We should try to make a learning schedule. My schedule begins with learning one *aliya* of the *parsha* with *Targum* and *Rashi*. I also try to cover at least two *blatt* daily of *Gemora* with *Rashi*. (I don't know you well, but with ArtScroll available for help in both *Chumash* and *Gemora*, these seem to be reasonable goals for most.) If you prefer learning *b'iyun* (in depth), you could make a time-based schedule, a commitment to

Pinchas Gafni is a *nom de plume*.

spend X number of hours in a *Beis Hamidrash*. I also monitor my performance on a private chart (on my Palm Pilot) to make sure that I reach my goals. (I felt good, sitting back after being on this program for four months, realizing that I had learnt over 250 *blatt*.)

## 2. Stay Active

Go for a 20-minute jog. Instead of driving to *Mincha*, walk. Or play basketball, racquetball, ride your bike.... Keeping active staves off depression and keeps us fit, to boot!

## 3. Daven for Others

There are others we know who also are in need of a job now. Channeling our dependency to ask *Hashem* for help not only for ourselves but for others will help us realize the power of *tefilla*. Perhaps this falls under *mispallel be'ad chavairo ve'hu tzarich l'oso davar hu ne'eneh techila* – Whoever prays on behalf of his (or her) friend, when in need of the very same type of help, will be answered first by *Hashem*.

While on the topic of *tefilla*, it is in place to emphasize that it is worthwhile to work on *davening*. When we come on time and can actually say the words, and we say them audibly, it's easier to feel that there's Someone listening.

I don't know if it's proper to suggest this, but sometimes, it may be good to *daven* alone. You can take your time, say all the words out loud, and even cry to *Hashem* without feeling self-conscious.

## 4. Bitachon/Faith

**B**itachon is a difficult topic. It is quite a challenge to figure out the right measure of *hishtadlus* (personal effort) necessary for our personal *bitachon*, and it is not easy to properly view the *hishtadlus* that we must invest. How does one become a *baal bitachon* – a person of genuine faith? Unfortunately, difficult circumstances can sometimes force us to grow in our *bitachon*, since we realize that there's no one else to turn to. While we do not want to ask for difficulties, now we are in that situation.

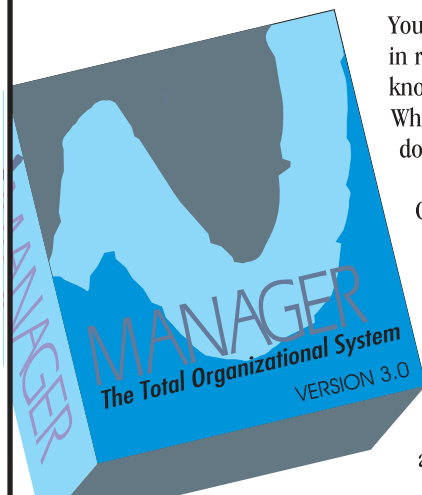
So let us use it to our advantage. Let us learn through *Shaar Habitachon* of *Chovos HaLevavos*, and the second *perek* of the *Chazon Ish's Emuna U'bitachon*. While it may begin with a realization that *parnassa* is in *Hashem's* hands, we will soon realize that *bitachon* is not just in the head. There are real actions that *bitachon* mandates. Whether how to act on an interview (to wear a *yarmulke*, not to shake a woman's hand – if that is what your *Rav* has *paskened*) or how to deal with someone whom we

know is searching for the same position as us, learning the guidelines of *bitachon* will help us act properly, and by extension we become *ba'alei bitachon*.

Working on our *bitachon* will help us know – initially, on a superficial level – that our situation is not only not a bad one, but it's because *Hashem* loves us so much and is always seeking to benefit us that He put us in this situation. Whether He wants us to grow from it, whether it's a vehicle to grant us *kapara* (atonement for sins) in this world, or whether there are other reasons that we cannot fathom, if we first become aware of these possibilities, and then consider them more deeply, we will be on the road to becoming *ba'alei bitachon* and *same'ach b'chelkeinu*.

Let me share a thought: We conclude the *berachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* with "*Baruch Atta Hashem...*" When we say *Hashem's* Name, we're supposed to realize that He was, is, and will always be Master of All. Even when we ask *Hashem* for *parnassa* in "*Bareich Aleinu*," and it seems as though He's not listening, we should realize that He alone has the power to give us everything in no time at all (Master of All). But He is eternal, and has a broader perspective. He has a reason for giving us these emotional *yesurim* (challenges). We may not ever understand or know the reason, but it's still true. It's with this knowledge that

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we conclude our requests.

Aside from the *zechusim* this attitude brings to us and all *Klal Yisroel*, it also enhances our *shalom bayis*. How can a wife not respect a husband who, going through a tough time, turns to *Hashem*? Persevering in this area shows clearly that what makes us productive people, what defines us, is not our daily job, but our relationship with *Hashem*.

#### 5. Be a Mentsch

Just because we have nowhere official to go today doesn't mean we don't need to shave (for those who normally do), shower, and look neat. Dress for success, they say. We know that clothing tells us either where a person is holding, or where he is going. If we don't take

pride in ourselves, why should our wives and children?

We should arise at a normal hour. Having a 9:30 *Shacharis minyan* in the neighborhood doesn't mean we have to *daven* there. Wake up early, help get the kids off to school, implement your learning schedule, and you'll already have achieved something today.

#### 6. Seize the Moment

Use the time to do the things that we normally wouldn't have the opportunity to do. Help out at home more. I sometimes feel foolish doing the shopping; I'm advertising the fact that I don't have a job to everyone who sees me. But besides the fact that most of the time people are thinking

about their own problems, now is the time to help out. *Soon, be'ezras Hashem, we'll be working and won't be able to help out as much.* Our wives will feel more secure and loved knowing that we would help them if we could – after all, when we were able to, we did! Also, it will help us commiserate more with our wives; we come to realize that it's not so easy doing these "simple" chores.

Let's view this time as a special privilege given us to get to know our kids better. Spend some more time with them – they want to see a father who cares about them, not one who is grumbling, sulking about.

#### 7. Talk About it to Someone

Whether that someone is a professional, a friend, a spouse, or even ourselves, we have to try to get the anxiety, anger, and frustration out of us. *Da'aga b'lev ish yasichena – l'acheirim* (*Sota* 42b). It's especially helpful to talk it over with a *Rebbi* (and if you don't have one, get one now; pick a *talmid chacham* you respect and get his number!) who can provide a *Da'as Torah* perspective.

This is a long list. I wish I could tell you that I practice what I preach. But I think that as long as we're on this path, even though we have bad days, we are on the road to real success.

May you have *hatzlacha* in finding your *parnassa*. May it be a *parnassa kalla, nekiya, b'hetter, b'nachas, and b'derech kavod* (a livelihood that is easy, clean, legitimate, non-stressful and dignified), and may you find it soon.

With concern,

A Fellow Jew

*If I may, I would like to include a short note to the Jewish community at large.*

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### 1. Try to Help

Just as *shadchanim* take the personal information of singles and store it until they find a proper match, we must try to be *meshadech* – match up – people with jobs. When we become aware that a person was laid off, we should inquire as to his profession, and use our connections to hook him up with prospective employers. Now is the time to use those connections! Don't forget what Mordechai told Esther: "*U'mi yode'a im l'es kazos higa'at lamalchus* – who knows if it is not for this moment that you were destined to be queen!" Perhaps helping this person is what *Hashem* wants you to do through your position and influence. Even if your connections are not empowered to hire, they may be able to provide guidance.

It follows that if we're in the position to give guidance, let's be patient and try to help. If we can't hire the person because of his or her personal or professional defect, let's be gentle in providing the path to the solution.

### 2. Be Sensitive

Even the most relaxed of people may be very uncomfortable with jokes about their not having a job. When I walked in one morning to the *beis hamidrash* I frequent, one person good naturedly said, "Oh, you're off

today?" and it stung a little.

Be aware that when you ask an unemployed person how his search is coming along, you may be embarrassing him. If it is asked privately, and the intent is to show concern and empathy, it may be proper. But use your judgment, because these inquiries may make some uncomfortable.

It need not be said that comments such as, "What do you do all day?"; a casual conversation-making, "How's the job search going?"; and caustic advice such as, "You know what your problem is? You're too aggressive/not aggressive enough; you're being too picky/you have to hold out for the position you want . . ." are beyond the pale.

### 3. Divrei Hisorerus and Shiurim

While there are constant rallies for the situation in *Eretz Yisroel*, the financial crisis is another good reason to *darshan* to Jews. The unemployed are not the only ones who need *chizuk*, as there are some who have jobs but still cannot make ends meet, and others who are in constant fear of losing their jobs.

A *Rav* – as well as a good friend – is in the position to empathize, and can also gently recommend a daily *shiur* that would benefit the job seeker. He (and his wife) will be grateful.

The *Midrash* in *Bereishis* 20,9 sheds

light on this:

Rabbi Eliezer says: *Geula* is compared to *parnassa*, and *parnassa* to *geula*. . . Just as *geula* is ushered in with wonders, so too is *parnassa*; just as *parnassa* is daily, so, too, is *geula*. Rabbi Yishmael bar Nachman says: [*Parnassa*] is greater than the *geula*, because *geula* is achieved through a *malach*, and *parnassa* is through *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

In the *zechus* of being *nosei be'ol im chavereinu*, may we never know of financial hardships, and may we be *zocheh* to the ultimate *geula* speedily in our days.

Thank you,

A Fellow Jew

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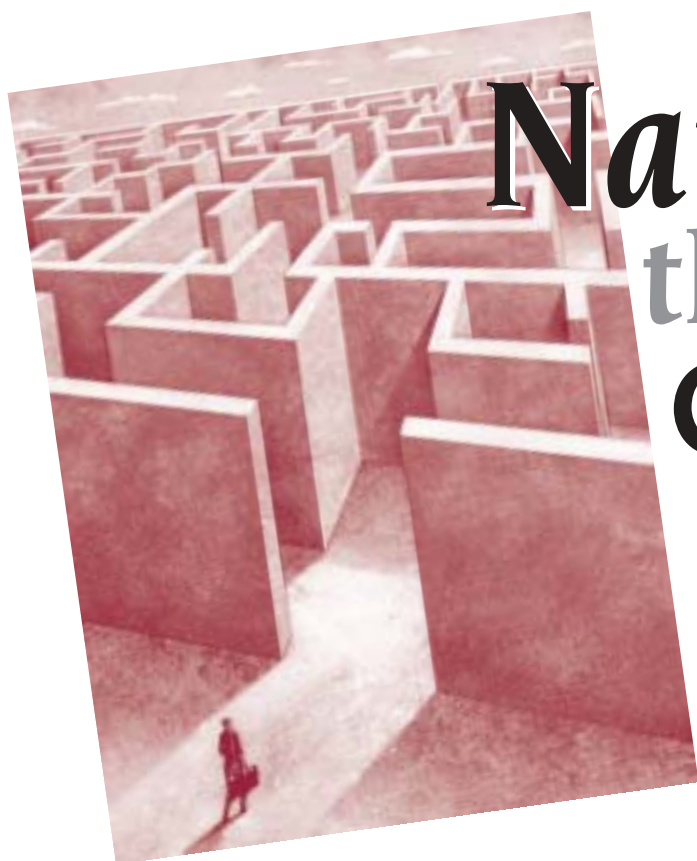
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# Navigating the Current Job Market

**How to search for, land,  
and keep your job**

**I**  
**W**e live today in difficult economic times, when company downsizing and re-engineering across all industries are reducing the workforce of the country. Companies are also outsourcing more of their work, sending it to be done in foreign countries such as India, where labor is far less expensive. It is becoming more difficult to find a first job, to retain a job, and to obtain another job when a layoff hits home. Many people need advice on how to find and hold a job, particularly now, when our community is hit hard by global and national economic difficulties.

The first step for a *Yisroel ma'amin* is always a spiritual one—to recognize the role of the *Ribbono shel Olam* in the

Gedaliah Weinberger, general manager of SMS/American Healthware, in Brooklyn, wrote the above article in collaboration with Yossie Feldman, Shmuel Lefkowitz and Chaim Kuperwasser, who serve with him on the executive committee of PCS (Professor Career Services). PCS is a division of Agudath Israel of America. He also acknowledges the contribution of the staff of PCS.

affairs of nations and in one's personal affairs. The *Gemora (Sanhedrin 113a)* says that the *mafte'ach parnassa*, the key to a livelihood, is in the hands of *Hashem* Himself, not given to a Divine intermediary. The first advice to a *frum* job-seeker is to allow yourself to beseech the *Borei uManhig Ha'olam* to send you success in your job search and in all your affairs.

The Torah teaches us that if you are *mispallel* for your friend and need the fruit of such a *tefilla* yourself, you will have priority in being answered. So, in your *tefillos* for a job for yourself, include a *tefilla* for your neighbor who is in similar circumstances. Even if you are employed at the moment, you nevertheless need a *tefilla* for *parnassa*, as no one knows what will or can happen from one minute to the next. A *tefilla* for the welfare of all of *Klal Yisroel's parnassa*, and in particular for your neighbor who was just laid off, or for his son who is leaving *kollel* trying to support his family, can have unknown and untold beneficial consequences for yourself.

**II**  
**A**fter spiritually reinforcing himself, a jobseeker must make every natural *hishtadlus* (effort) to obtain employment to sustain himself and his family. Different advice applies to every different case, and rule #1 is to always seek advice for your particular circumstances.

## ENTRY-LEVEL JOBSEEKERS

**T**he first job is often the hardest to obtain – you have no track record that a prospective employer can rely on, and no experience that will help guide you in job performance.

Nevertheless, never give up. Here is some timely advice.

- A key activity in any job search is networking. Meet people, introduce yourself and ask your acquaintances and the people you meet about possible jobs. Ask them to introduce you to others who might have jobs or leads. Take advantage of your network of friends.
- Develop a good resume and good

interviewing skills. Ask friends who are experienced in hiring people what they think of your resume and how it can be improved. Undergo mock interviews and listen carefully to the feedback you receive on your performance. Then, send your resume to as many people as possible. Most go into the garbage, but all you need is one to find its mark.

- It is difficult for an employer to differentiate between one entry-level job-seeker and another. What may distinguish you is your eagerness and willingness to work hard. Approach a job with a humble attitude. Recognize that it will take time for you to reach maximum productivity and to provide maximum value to your employer. Display genuineness and sincerity, and a commitment to whatever tasks you will be given.

- Determine what type of job suits your personality and disposition: what would you like to do and what do you think you would be good at? There are commercial tests available that can identify the types of occupation that would suit you. Once you determine an area in which you want to work and in which you think you can succeed, gain the requisite skills. Take a training course or enroll in a program that teaches the skills you will need. Many employers will only consider trained applicants, and certain training is standard for many occupations. Few employers will hire an entry-level employee and offer him training. Moreover, get as much education and training as possible. If you have the time to spare before you go on a job search, take the time to get professional education. It is rare for a starting level job to pay \$30,000 or \$40,000 with no professional training or experience.

- One way to get into a particular industry is by volunteering or through internships. Most employers will not take the time to guide a totally untrained neophyte in an active business, but sometimes internship opportunities do arise. Take these if available and treat an internship just as you would a regular job. An internship sometimes turns into a paying job. Even if it does

not, it provides valuable experience and references for your resume which will set you apart from other applicants for other jobs.

- Certain skills are useful or necessary in almost any job: English communication skills, math skills and, often, computer skills. Try to obtain these to as high a level as possible. They can only benefit you and make you more capable in job performance.

- Be flexible in terms of your salary requirements or the type of job you are willing to take. The goal of the first job is not to make a lot of money right away—it is to establish a base for a lifetime of good income. The skills you learn and the career you launch are much more important than the actual dollars you take home your first week on the job. The spouse of an entry-level jobseeker must be considerate and understand the realities of the situation. Low pay (or no pay in the case of some internships or apprenticeships) is not a sign of the intrinsic worth or potential of the worker; it is dictated by supply and demand and the unfortunate rigors of the marketplace.

- Treat the first job (or for that matter any job) as a wonderful opportunity—not as an unfortunate hurdle to be crossed. Gain experience in the profession or business in which you are working, in general business skills, as well as in interpersonal skills in the workplace. And, of course, work at something you enjoy, if at all possible. You rarely succeed in something you do not enjoy.

#### IF YOU LOSE A JOB

Unfortunately, too many people today are faced with the loss of a long-time job and they need to reenter the job market. Here, also, there are a number of tips that can help you maximize your chances of finding a new job.

- Don't expect a new job to come to you. Sitting back and waiting for an offer from all who know of your good work and high reliability is very unlikely to be successful in today's climate. Again, start

networking—meeting people, talking to them, getting referrals, asking for friends who might have a lead, and letting as many people as possible know that you are available. Particularly important is to contact former business associates, employers and co-workers who know of your capabilities. Do not be embarrassed to let people know you are looking for a job and need their help. It has been estimated that only 25% of jobs today are filled by recruiters, headhunters, ads, or web sites; 75% are filled by referrals and networking.

- Find a mentor. Locate someone you can talk to whose advice you respect and who understands your industry. Listen to his assessment of the various companies in your industry and the key people you can approach with your resume and with a low-key appeal for an interview. Review your resume carefully. Make sure it is complete and appealing in both format and content.

- Don't turn down any interview. While you may know that a job is unsuitable for you, the interviewer may know of some other job closer to your area, or may know of someone else hiring in your area.

- Make a realistic assessment of your skills and what you can contribute to a company. The time that you are out of a job is an opportunity to hone the skills that you are missing or that have atrophied over time.

- The experience you gained in your previous jobs is twofold: technical experience and industry experience. Even if your technical experience is not now in demand, see if you can use your industry experience to gain a job in the same industry doing something else.

- Reassess your value in the current economic climate and your industry. It may well be that current economic conditions and the employment market cannot support your previous salary for the job you were doing, and that a concession may be in order.

- Be ready to take a job that is different from what you were doing. Your knowledge in one job or industry may make you particularly attractive in another one. Even if, at first glance, a job

seems unsuitable, investigate it further before dismissing it. Remember, you are seeking the job; it is not seeking you.

*A young man was trained as a computer programmer and worked successfully in the computer industry, but his company downsized. As one of the last to be hired, he was let go. He found a short-term job as a computer consultant for several months, but that assignment ended and no replacement was found. He took a job in real estate management on a short-term basis until, he hopes, the computer industry picks up again. In the meantime, he is reading computer books and magazines to keep current with his chosen profession.*

Generally, consider changing careers permanently only as a last resort. Nevertheless, even in today's difficult times, there are industries and occupations where there are shortages and you might consider researching one of those areas. Some of these occupations may require training, costing time and money at a stage when you can least afford both. Investigate these fields and see whether you are suited for them by temperament. It may be worth the investment.

- Many people who have lost their jobs for several months become depressed and listless. Their family and social lives suffer tremendously. It is very important to keep up a normal life of relationships and friendships. [See

the previous article – editor]. It may be necessary to consult with a *rav* or a therapist, or discuss things with a good friend. A time of crisis is a time for more candid conversation. It is not a time to retreat into a shell. At a job interview, you should exude confidence, enthusiasm and excitement, projecting a presence the employer wants to have in his place of business. Recognize that economic times are difficult and that many people are caught up in a maelstrom not of their own doing. Don't blame yourself, and don't blame anyone else. Take constructive steps and don't give up.

#### PRESERVING YOUR CURRENT JOB

**A**n ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In a robust, expanding economy, the best advice may be to move from job to job, constantly upgrading your skill set, experience and salary rate. In an economy such as ours, however, preserving a job is an important priority. You still should continue to upgrade your skill set and your experience, even if you cannot increase your salary. You want to become more valuable – even essential – to your employer.

- Seek out new ideas and concepts that can help your company or business. Your boss may pick someone else to lay off if you are the one who is constantly feeding him innovative ideas that help him and his department or company get ahead. A businessman running his own company also has to constantly come up with innovations to stay a step ahead of the competition. To keep customers, you cannot be complacent, and to keep a job, you need to be proactive.

*An employee was riding in a car with several other people, and he heard them talking about several ideas. Although they were speaking about a totally different industry, the ideas had applicability to his own job and company. The next day, he told his boss what he had heard and how it might apply to them. The boss said, "That's what I like about you. Some peo-*

One must be constantly moving forward, in everything he does – in his relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, in his relationship with his fellow man, in his relationship with himself...

*ple think about their job only from 9 to 5, while they're here at the office. But you're constantly looking for new ideas and always thinking about how we can benefit." That employee was able to advance in responsibility and pay and was protected from layoffs when times became tough.*

- One must be a *holech* – constantly moving forward, not standing still, in everything he does—in his relationship with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, in his relationship with his fellow man, in his relationship with himself... in his relationships with his employer and with his craft. You should be picking up new skills, learning new tasks, contributing in new ways.

- Look around in your industry. If you have the specific skills that some other company needs, you may be very valuable to that other company, and *may* be able to switch jobs with a significant salary increase, despite the general hard times. You should also be attuned to your general company and division performance. If the company or division is not doing well, anticipate the possibility of layoffs and stagnant salaries, and seek to make a switch to a different company when the opportunity arises. It is much easier to find a new job when you are employed than after you are laid off.

- Needless to say, develop and retain a strong work ethic. Make up time for

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*Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov.* While you may not want to, nor should you, become “one of the boys,” neither should you develop into an iconoclastic loner who has minimal contact with co-workers.

- Don’t display cynicism about other people’s habits or motives. Judge people favorably and fairly, and work with others pleasantly and effectively.

- Finally, establish and maintain a network so if you lose a job, you will have people to whom to turn for help and advice. Write down names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of whomever you contact during the course of your work and keep the information in a permanent form, so it will be available one, two or five years from now.

- Keep copies of your work so that you can use them in your hunt for the next job. These copies should be kept at home insofar as company policy permits, since you may not be able to gain access to your office or files when the axe hits. Of course, you may not divulge confidential company information, even if you do have to look for another job.

#### HELPING OTHERS

It is important to realize that we are all responsible for one another. We may enjoy favorable circum-

stances today, yet need the assistance of others tomorrow. Such assistance can only be forthcoming if we foster a sense of *achdus* (unity) and *achrayus* (responsibility) within the community. The *Ribbono Shel Olam* may be making us successful today precisely because we are aware of our *achrayus* and act on it, or to enable us to help others when they come calling for assistance. If we fail, our own success may be in jeopardy.

Yet it is not the fear of our own insecurities that should motivate us to help others. On the highest level, it is simply because that is what the *Ribbono Shel Olam* wants us to do, because He wants us to be like Him – merciful, compassionate, and generous. And what reward awaits us for finding a livelihood for an entire family, for taking the time to listen to an out-of-work fellow pour out his heart and simply sympathize, let alone give him helpful advice! The positive effects compound themselves into possible lifetimes of difference even into future generations. Some of that goodness and *beracha* certainly adheres to us.

So, when someone tells you he has lost his job, take the time to listen and to think of how you can advise him. *Do you know of a possible job? Do you know how to approach a particular potential employer? Do you know of someone else who might have a job opening or who might be able to offer better advice, to whom you can refer the jobseeker?* Keep your ears open for potential jobs, for potential industries or fields or companies that are hiring. Familiarize yourself with possible training programs or organizations that can help jobseekers. Offer to read a resume, and offer constructive comments. Offer to conduct a mock interview if you have had experience in interviewing people for jobs.

Sometimes, you will be going out on a limb with your employer if you recommend someone who doesn’t work out. So take the time to make a realistic assessment of whether the jobseeker is someone you want to

introduce to your company and in what capacity. But make the effort to do that assessment and advise the jobseeker accordingly.

Even if you don’t know of an opening or of a referral you can make, simply going over to the fellow who lost his job and holding a conversation with him is enormously uplifting to someone who feels he has been bypassed by society. Show him you care and empathize, and let him know that you are proud to count him as your friend and associate. A kind word is of incalculable value.

If you hear of a job opening, make people aware of it. Ask your friends and colleagues, “Do you know of anyone suitable to whom I can mention the job opening?” Consultants and public accountants who visit many companies are in a particularly advantaged position to hear of possible openings. They should be on the lookout constantly for such opportunities and for ways they can pass the information on to benefit someone in our community.

You can help extend a person’s reach by making your contacts available to him. Allow yourself to be in his network and bring your own network in contact with his. You will also find your own network has grown by the intersections you have helped foster.

Helping another person find a job is an even higher form of *tzeddaka* than being *mispallel* for your friend. Whoever can help another person find or retain a job will certainly merit to be answered for one’s own needs. ■

*Professional Career Services (PCS) is a division of Agudath Israel of America. Over the past 12 years, PCS has helped place over 2000 people in a large variety of positions and industries. If you know of any job openings, PCS should be the first place you call. If you are interested in volunteering, or if you need a job, call the PCS offices in New York (718-436-1900) or New Jersey (732-905-9700).*

# Is Your Travel Permit VALID?

## IS IT ON THE MAP?

Long distance travel, driving in particular, is very much a way of life for most Americans, and equally so for countless citizens of other countries. Who thinks twice about the one-hundred-minute trip from Monsey, NY, to Brooklyn, or the regular summer commute between Boro Park and the Catskills, which can easily take double that time? We calculate distances in hours, plan our trip accordingly, assuming we'll run to schedule, top off the gas tank, buckle up (it's the law), and drive off. En route, we tune in to traffic news in order to avoid congestion, roadwork, police activity, trouble spots and accident delays. We can then call our friends on the cell to tell them exactly when to expect us.

For some reason, the most important preparation is all too frequently neglected. The *Gemora* (*Berachos* 29b) instructs us, "If you wish to travel, consult your Master before departure." This is a reference to *Tefillas Haderech*, the basic text of which follows in the *Gemora*. The details are given in *Orach Chaim* (110:3-7) and in the works of numerous later *poskim*. *Shiurim* have frequently been given on this topic, particularly under the auspices of the respected sponsor of public Torah lectures, Irgun Shiurai Torah. An excellent compendium on the subject, entitled "Tzelosa D'Chaye," by Rabbi M. Abraham שליט"א, was published in Monsey, in 5749/1989.

In a complicated world, riddled with so many overwhelming problems –

ranging from terrorism to kids at risk, from life threatening diseases to crumbling *shalom bayis* – you may question whether this is a subject deserving exposure in these pages. Firstly, we are discussing an item of practical *halacha* – which is, by definition, a topic of relevance. Secondly, it is essential that we dig a little deeper in this particular scenario.

## A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVES

The carefree attitude that casually dismisses *Tefillas Haderech* as unnecessary or irrelevant delivers a deeply disturbing message. It is tantamount to saying: "Now look here, I'm no novice. I've been on the roads for ages. I've covered hundreds of thousands of miles. What's the problem – you think I can't handle this little trip? I am quite capable of taking care of myself. Come on, let's go!"

When someone does give *Tefillas Haderech* the few moments of attention it deserves, however, he too is making a statement. His message sounds rather different: "Dear Hashem, without Your help I am grounded, lost, paralyzed. I need You on a trip... and the roads can be as treacherous as a battlefield. Only with Your heavenly assistance can I get through this safely. Please have Your angels accompany me to my destination."

I have a deep inner feeling that there could well be reactions from Above as follows. To the first traveler, the likely reaction could be: "Fine! You are self-sufficient and big enough to take care of yourself. So do your own thing, do it your way."

The second traveler would, naturally, evoke a very contrasting response. "My beloved son, your request has been heard and has registered. Angels have already been dispatched to join you till

journey's end. But do drive carefully."

Now that we realize more clearly what is at stake here, we can rethink our attitude towards this vital *tefilla*. We ask ourselves, do we or don't we recognize the need for Heavenly assistance every step we take? Or do we take all this for granted? But we are surely aware that a moment of distraction at the wheel can turn a trip into a tragedy, and can ruin or terminate lives, *challila*. And yet, with a few lines of this *tefilla* we can apply for that desperately needed protection for a whole day!

## ANECDOTAL ATTESTATION

Incidents picked up during recent months and recorded below have prompted me to conclude as follows: We do need to return to basics. Let us learn the fundamentals in a comfortable way. The other way works, but who would not want to avoid the painful experience! An accident, *challila*, with all the nasty shock, damage, trauma and heartache, does drive the lesson home, but to learn it from an article is somewhat more pleasant.

The stories all point to one simple home truth. Our greatest strength lies in the admission of our total weakness. That is the implication of *Tefillas Haderech*. I have been collecting anecdotes to prove the point. This in turn prompted me to search for cases where *Tefillas Haderech* was said properly and a serious accident occurred in spite of it. To date, no such story has been logged. I somehow doubt whether it ever will....

• In the summer of 2002, two cases of fairly serious road accidents came to my attention. One was on the well-known and well-traveled Route 17 heading for the Catskills. I "told" the young man who reported it that I was

Rabbi Pinchos Jung serves as educational director of Partners in Torah, as well as Dean of Beth Rochel School for Girls, in Monsey, NY. His article, "Be A Better Baal Tefilla," appeared in JO, Nov. '02.

sure the travelers failed to say *Tefillas Haderech*. He returned two weeks later to confirm my suspicion. Not long after that, the same young man told me of a hair-raising incident on the New Jersey Turnpike. Again I enquired, “Did they say *Tefillas Haderech*?” This time he came back saying, “They didn’t know.” I took the liberty to reply: “They don’t know, but I think I do!”

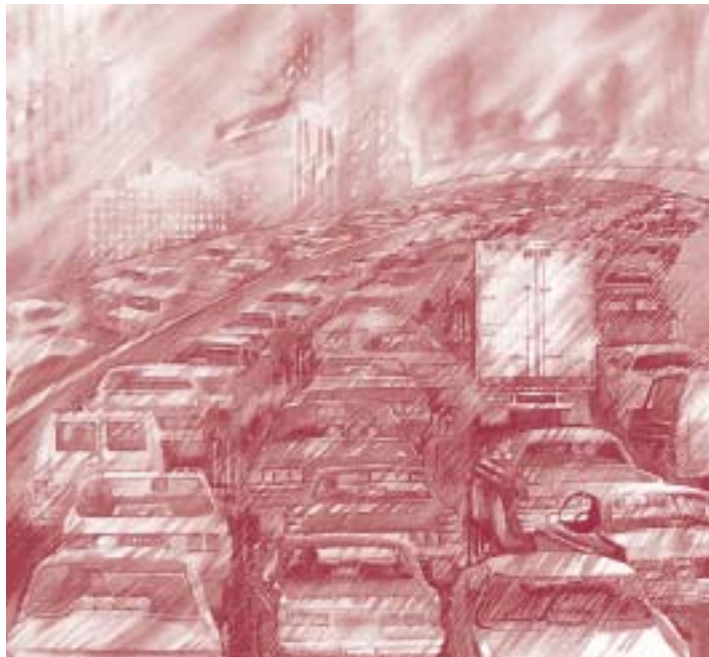
• Many years ago I had my own nightmare on the M25 Motorway that encircles London and has become something of a racetrack. I was admittedly traveling a little too fast in a small van that was laden too heavily. Experts will tell you not to do that. It started swaying from side to side, lost control, turned over and ended up on its roof, near the central reservation. As I unceremoniously worked my way out of the wrecked vehicle, the motorists who stopped, having watched the horror as they drove behind me, stared in wonderment at the unhurt, unshaken survivor. “I said a wayfarer’s prayer,” was my brief response to their amazement.

• Following a *shiur* on this subject, a participant related a recent incident. Traveling back to Monsey from Yonkers with five passengers in the car, the driver suddenly lost control. It was around 4:30 pm when traffic on the 287 Thruway is heaviest. The last thing you want to do is lose control in the fast lane. The car swerved to the center but the driver regained control, getting back in lane with the rush-hour traffic. An important footnote: when saying *Tefillas Haderech* on the outward journey, they added the words “*vesachzireinu leshalom*, and return us peacefully...”

• An incident in England in the early 1950’s actually made its way into the pages of London’s popular *Daily Express*. Rabbi Shmuel Lopian זצ”ל (son of Reb Elya זצ”ל) was traveling by train from London to Cardiff, Wales. A seri-

ous accident occurred involving injuries and even fatalities. Only one carriage of the entire train remained completely undamaged. The gentiles around Rabbi Lopian expressed their astonishment at the special treatment meted out to his carriage. His reply was brief and straightforward. “I had just finished saying The Wayfarer’s Prayer.”

As far as those who do not say *Tefillas Haderech* are concerned, we have only mentioned one reason for this omission. This was an irresponsible, exaggerated confidence in one’s own ability. The cure one might suggest to this traveler is to listen carefully to the traffic update. Is



there a single report that does not refer to serious accidents? Do these things only happen to “other people”? If the cause of the omission is plain ignorance, the cure is obviously to study the references quoted above. Research, however, has shown that it is often the combination of several factors that is responsible. Over-complacency combined with a misguided belief that this trip does not warrant it.

#### BLESSING OR PRAYER?

**T**here is yet another issue that needs attention. Some are over-cautious in their fear of making

a *beracha levatala* (unjustified *beracha*). Probably, they have not reviewed the subject thoroughly enough to reach clarity in the matter. Although a *poseik* should be consulted on this type of question, as well as on any doubts in day-to-day *halacha*, a few observations should be made.

Firstly, a *beracha* is categorized as such when it includes the *Shem* (the Name/s of Hashem) and *Malchus* (reference to Hashem as King). This rule (*Berachos* 12a) therefore would not technically define *Tefillas Haderech* as a *beracha*. (See *Peshachim* 104b, *Tosafos “Kol”* and *Tur, Orach Chayim* 110.) That would permit us a little more flexibility (*Tzelosa D’Chaye*, Introduction, 2:3).

Secondly, there is always an option, in case of genuine doubt, to omit the *Shem* in the concluding phrase. This is infinitely better than traveling with no request for Heavenly help whatsoever.

Thirdly, when undertaking longer trips within a city, it is advisable to say *Tefillas Haderech*, but without the *Shem*. Actually it would be appropriate to say it in full on such journeys nowadays, as the risks of traveling on the highways are very real. We, however, need to adhere to the original institution of *Chazal* which

introduced this prayer for out-of-town travel, as that was the main setting of dangerous travel in those days. (*Tzelosa D’Chaye*, part 1 ch. 2, p. 4 and ftnt. 11 quoting *Chazon Ish*)

Even the recitation of some chapter of *Tehillim* – typically 91 – would be a constructive suggestion. This includes the verse (11), “He will charge His angels for you, to protect you in all your ways.” By reading this chapter, we are in some way “consulting our Master before departure,” and admitting the truth – we *do* need Your help!

Whichever option you finally choose, just make sure you have a valid travel permit.... ■

# The Sacrifice of Leadership

The world perceives leadership as opportunity to lead, while the Torah world sees it as opportunity to serve.

Sandwiched between headlines about the situation in Iraq, the budget crisis in the city, and the ever-painful news from *Eretz Yisroel*, were several days of coverage of the recent publication of the former first lady, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's new autobiography. With a million copies printed, and an advance of 8 million dollars, Senator Clinton seemed to appear everywhere at the same time.

One particular interview caught my attention. The Senator was asked to explain the central message that she would like the readers to gain from reading her book. She responded, "Leadership requires strength and power, and only the strongest will make it to the top."

As I contemplated those words heard on the radio interview, I thought about the great Torah leaders (*lehavdil*) that I was *zocheh* to meet and observe in my

Rabbi Ginzberg, founding Rav of Ohr Moshe Torah Institute in Hillcrest, NY, is currently Rav of the Chofetz Chaim Torah Center of Cedarhurst (Long Island), New York. He is a frequent contributor to *JO*, most recently with "Angelic Reflections" (April '03).

life, and thought what their message would be if they had written their autobiography. I believe their message would be that leadership requires – yes, strength and conviction – but more than anything else, it also requires sacrifice.

#### TORAH LEADERS OF NOTE

One of the first *yeshivos* of higher learning in the United States was established in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1922, by Rabbi Yehuda

Heschel Levenburg זצ"ל, a Slobodka *talmid* who was sent personally by the *Alter* of Slobodka זצ"ל to open a *yeshiva* in America.

Years later, on his deathbed, he told one of his closest *talmidim*, Rabbi Sender Linchner (founder of Boys Town in Bayit Vegan), "You have no idea what real *mesiras nefesh* is. You probably think of *mesiras nefesh* as being burnt at the stake to sanctify *Hashem's* name. That is really *mesiras haguf* – offering one's body. I could have stayed in Slobodka and spent my life going through *Shas* many, many times. Instead, I came to America and spent my days collecting tomatoes from the Jewish farmers around New Haven so the boys from the Yeshiva would have something to eat. That is true *mesiras nefesh*." (For more details about this short-lived *yeshiva*, see Yonoson Rosenblum's biography of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz זצ"ל, *ArtScroll*, p. 82.)

The Ponovezer Rav זצ"ל traveled throughout the world to raise funds for building his life's dream, the Ponovez

Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. He once returned from a particularly difficult and exhausting trip overseas and, when he entered the *beis midrash*, turned to the students who came to greet him and said, "I gave *Klal Yisroel* the greatest gift that I could possibly give them. I gave them the accomplished Torah scholar that I could have become had I stayed behind in the *beis midrash* rather than becoming a fundraiser."

This was confirmed by Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל when he eulogized the Ponovezer Rav זצ"ל at his *levaya* (funeral). He broke down and sobbed uncontrollably; then, regaining his composure, he said, "With his great genius, he selflessly sacrificed the mind of the *Shaagas Aryeh* for the sake of building Torah for the next generation." (The *Shaagas Aryeh* זצ"ל was known for his extraordinary brilliance in all aspects of Torah.)

#### POWER... OR POTENTIAL?

This is the way it has always been. Those who stepped up or were appointed to positions of leadership sacrificed of themselves in their commitment to *Klal Yisroel*. Often these positions of leadership were forced upon them, yet they stood straight and tall, and sometimes dedicated their very lives for others; not the way our political leaders have achieved their positions of leadership, where they did not sacrifice themselves, but rather sacrificed others who stood in their way in their climb to the top.

When the Stoliner Rebbe, Rabbi Yochanan Perlow זצ"ל, came to America after World War II, the loss of most of his family, *talmidim* and *Chassidim* overwhelmed him. He wanted to spend his remaining years as a private citizen. His few surviving *Chassidim*, however, would not allow him that option. They begged him, "We have lost everything and we need your leadership to help us rebuild our lives." The *Rebbe* זצ"ל replied, "We prefer not to lead, but if we're forced to, we will do so until our very last drop of blood." And he did just that.

The world view of leadership is power; the Torah view is potential. The

world perceives leadership as opportunity to lead, while the Torah world sees it as opportunity to serve.

At the *levaya* of the late Rabbi Moshe Sherer זצ"ל, the longtime leader of Agudath Israel of America, his son Rabbi Shimshon Sherer perhaps captured best the spirit of his father's leadership in his *hesped*. He related a story that took place some five years earlier. Rabbi Moshe Sherer was scheduled to enter the hospital to undergo a major heart operation. As he was about to leave home, his devoted son began to cry at the realization of the seriousness of the impending surgery. His father asked him, "Why are you crying? The doctor said that if I undergo this surgery it will prolong my life another ten years. That means another ten years of service to *Klal Yisroel*. That's not a reason to cry; on the contrary, it's a reason to have a *rekida*. Come, let's dance together for this great opportunity that I will have over the next ten years."

And so, together, father and son locked in embrace, danced a *rikud* in the joy of service to *Klal Yisroel*.

This is leadership of value. This is leadership of dedication. And this is leadership of sacrifice.

Rabbi Sherer זצ"ל did not have book-signing events, nor did he write a book about his life's story. He instead chose to live every day of his life as a vibrant example of what exemplary Torah leadership means and what it represents.

#### ONE FINAL THOUGHT

Besides self-sacrifice, there is one other aspect that defines the very essence of Torah leadership that will not be found in the pages of this book; and that can be described in the very last words of another great Torah leader, the late Rabbi Moshe Blau זצ"ל, unforgettable *askan* (activist) from Yerushalayim, who served as head of Agudath Israel in *Eretz Yisroel*. On his deathbed, he is reputed to have said the following: "In my personal conduct, I unfortunately cannot say that my actions were always perfect and pure; however, in my public life, which I

devoted totally to the service of others, I can raise my hands confidently to Heaven and say: These are clean and without stain. I never took anything from anyone at anytime, let the heavens stand as my witness."

Only genuine Torah leadership that comes with dedication and sacrifice can make a similar claim.

May we merit not only to have such leadership, but also to appreciate it, as well. ■

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# Will That be *Gebrochts* or Non-*Gebrochts*?

It appeared scores of times when scanning the Anglo-Jewish media: You can enjoy it with Mickey or Goofy, or – for the more urbane and adventurous – you can indulge on the majestic snow-capped peaks of the Swiss Alps or the golden beaches of Cancun. For the more sedate, you can ply the balmy waters of the Mediterranean. Do you prefer the raucous din of the crowd or the intimacy of a private room?

It is endorsed by prominent rabbinic figures and certified by major organizations. Who ever thought that observing the Commandments could be so painless, effortless, so much fun, and oh *tres chic*?

As you've probably deduced, we are alluding to a major new social trend that has swept the Jewish Orthodox world – going to a hotel for Pesach. If you share my background (I am a middle-aged FFB), you will recall that the Pesach of our youth was the quintessence of families banding together in their respective homes. Every household in the pre-Pesach countdown was a frenetic hive of activities – cleaning, scrubbing, *kashering*, *toiveling* – all accompanied by the never ending stream of (good-natured) complaints. Can anyone forget the insane frustration of standing by the

Mr. Kaiser is a businessman living in Toronto. This is his first appearance in these pages.

*keilim mikva* trying to peel off the tiny “made in” stickers (which seemed to be placed on assorted utensils for no other reason than to plague us)?

It was a time when your home, with the emphasis on the kitchen, was literally turned over and inside out. All *chometz* eating was relegated to an obscure spot on the back steps, and woe to you if you were caught in violation. While the preparatory effort was certainly laborious and time-consuming, it was permeated with a tingling anticipation and excitement that culminated on the *Seder* night. It was always a magical moment at the conclusion of *Maariv* to breathlessly rush to your “transformed” home and convene the family *Seder*. The notion of a family abandoning their home and neighborhood *shul* and departing for some distant hotel was totally foreign, and would have been greeted with more bewilderment and sympathy than with envy.

Although the above scenes are undoubtedly replayed in the majority of Jewish homes today, the Pesach experience for tens of thousands of observant Jews is a different story.

On the one hand, there are friends – and individuals – who by dint of limitations of health, time, energy or space have no choice but to abandon the Pesach-at-home tradition, and opt for

a hotel setting. Some of our cautionary words, which follow, are addressed to them. But primarily the lines of this article are directed to those responding to the vacation, get-away-from-it-all pitch of the media ads, touting the recent explosion and proliferation of Pesach programs available throughout the globe. These have attracted a sizable clientele across a broad spectrum of Jews who are opting for the hotel setting for reasons of comfort and relaxation. Their choice has raised some disturbing issues for the participants, lay leaders and the community at large, and we believe it worth while bringing up several points for consideration.

## ACCULTURATION OF YOM TOV

One of the acute casualties of this nascent fashionable development is the subtle transformation of the *Yom Tov* from a religious festival into vacation-and-fun time, as defined by popular secular culture. *Korban Pesach* and its traditional heir, the Pesach *Seder*, are unique in stressing the prominence and participation of the family in the ancestral home. These themes are integrally woven into the very fabric of the *mitzva* and are reinforced throughout the drama of the *Seder*.

*Chazal* in general eschewed the tran-

sient and unfamiliar in matters of religious practice because these encouraged laxity in performance and a lowering of standards. This point is particularly germane to Pesach where we find an unusual abundance of widely accepted *chumros*. The time-honored custom among many groups has been not to *mish* (different households joining and sharing meals) on Pesach.

When *Chazal* spoke of *simchas Yom Tov*, it is difficult to imagine that they envisioned thousands of Jews abandoning their homes after emptying their closets and subsequently squeezing themselves and their finery into 150 square feet with one tiny closet and one bathroom. These people then proceed to spend the bulk of their time congregating in a massively overcrowded dining room where they fret about the quantity, frequency and variety of their menu. Contrast this with the classic *Seder* centered on the children as recipients of our sacred legacy, and as performers or narrators of the Exodus experience. And then consider the tragedy of an entire cadre of young people being raised with their sole experience of Pesach limited to a hotel setting. Is this the *chinuch*, the vaunted hallmark of the post-Holocaust era, we ardently strive to impart to our younger generation?

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

If you reside in a Jewish community and make the effort to investigate, you will confirm that virtually every Jewish organization, especially the educational institutions, are in dire financial straits. Check your local *mosad* (institution) and you will discover they are likely months in arrears in paying staff salaries.

Let us engage in some rough number crunching to calculate what is being spent on the Pesach hotel industry. *The Jewish Press* (Feb. 14, '03, p. 63) reported that 30,000 rooms were available this past Passover. On the assumption that each room houses at least two occupants at a minimum cost of \$1,500 per person, the amount spent yielded a figure

of \$90,000,000. I believe this number is low, as the cost of many Pesach programs run significantly higher than \$1,500. If one then adds the other related expenses, such as travel, car rental, mandatory (one cannot publicly be seen in the same outfit twice) wardrobe shopping, etc., it is not difficult to arrive at a staggering minimum annual outlay of \$100,000,000. (I suspect that the true figure is double or even triple.) Extrapolating one step further, in the span of a decade, which is a short period in the life of the community, a mind-boggling total of \$1,000,000,000 (that's a BILLION!) is being spent on what in many cases is frivolous self-indulgence.

Given the significant dollar figures and the sheer numbers of participants, one is hard pressed to assume that this activity is the sole preserve of the wealthy. How does one reconcile these extravagant sums with the dreadful financial state of our institutions? One must conclude that despite the present harsh economic climate, there exist ample funds in the Jewish world. The crisis at hand is priority, not availability.

#### ROLE OF LAY LEADERS

In all topical issues, our first inclination is to seek counsel and guidance from our rabbinic leaders. Rarely does a public sermon go by where the speaker does not castigate the opulent lifestyle so highly visible in our communities. Despite the popular and dearly held tradition of celebrating grand Jewish weddings, recent guidelines have been strongly suggested to limit and tone down every aspect of the wedding celebration – numbers of guests, menu, band size, flowers, etc. Where is the hue and cry over the ludicrous *annual* expense of going to a hotel for Pesach, in those cases when there is no compelling factor of health or emotional well being – a practice that has no historical or traditional precedent and is anathema to the spirit of Pesach? The rising popularity of leaving home for Pesach has been facilitated by the industry's seductive appeal to families to abandon the heavy exertion and effort

associated with the *Yom Tov* preparations, and instead enjoy the holiday as a pampered guest – the secret fantasy of every Jewish wife and mother.

To alleviate and to kosher the pangs of guilt, prominent rabbinic figures and personalities are enlisted to offer their skills and specialties in exchange for free vacations for the entire family. One of their purposes is to serve as a promotional fodder to attract customers to spend the big bucks. What is the lingering message that is conveyed to the less fortunate who are “left behind”? Is this the proper message these *rabbanim* and personalities should be promulgating? Wasn't it only *yesterday* that I sat at the convention attentively listening to impassioned pleas of how we all – even the well-heeled – must embrace

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an austere and simple lifestyle? Weren't we implored to carry the burden of our less fortunate brethren and take delicate care not to arouse jealousy with ostentatious displays of lavish and excessive lifestyles? The ultimate irony occurred a few years ago when a leading Israeli rabbinic figure was slated (it was averted, thank goodness) to be the scholar-in-residence over Pesach at an exclusive \$5,000 per person (!) ski resort in North America. Apparently, holiness at lofty altitudes does not come cheap.

#### KASHRUS STANDARDS

As mentioned, Pesach is associated with a painstaking caution regarding *Kashrus* – particularly since the laws of *bitul* (nullification)

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do not apply to *chometz* on Pesach, and even a minute presence is not lost. Thus – with absolutely no intention of impugning or maligning any Pesach hotel operators or *Kashrus*-certifying organizations – it is certainly in place to arouse an awareness and appreciation for the complexities involved in operating public kosher eating facilities, especially when the Pesach dimension is included.

With personal experience in the commercial food business, I was shocked at the frequent number of questions that surfaced. In many conversations with the head of our city's *Kashrus* organization, a highly respected *poseik*, he bemoaned people's erratic behavior. He remarked that the public would never tolerate a restaurant with one kitchen serving dairy in the morning and afternoon, but meat in the evening. Yet, this same public would readily patronize a hotel that does operate in such a manner. He continued by questioning how, when considering the infinitely complex and cumbersome details involved in Pesach, people could actually go away for the *Yom Tov*.

One of the most difficult aspects of running our food operation was the management and control of gentile staff. Despite persistent reminders and vigilant policing, there were constant infractions by the staff in bringing outside food onto the premises and then using

our utensils. The absence and distance of guests from the chaos and pandemonium that erupts daily in a hotel kitchen, when thousands of meals must be prepared and served within a short span of time to a very fickle crowd, conveys the illusion that the entire process is simple and headache-free. Out of sight is out of mind.

To be sure, there undoubtedly are hotels run by scrupulous proprietors, supervised by meticulous *mashgichim* overseeing the *Kashrus*. Thus, one would assume that – after checking out the ambience and recreational facilities – the prospective guest would leave no *Kashrus* claim unchecked, no certification unverified in researching the reliability of the establishment that will host his Pesach. This should be common practice.

#### UNPRECEDENTED PROSPERITY ... AT EXORBITANT COST

In conclusion, let us bear in mind that *Chazal* went to extraordinary lengths in designing the Jewish calendar to ensure that Pesach is perennially celebrated during the spring season. The timing of the holiday heralds the creation and formation of the wondrous Jewish nation. *Yom Tov* is a sacred moment of rebirth and rejuvenation. It affords an individual the glorious opportunity to take stock of not only his material harvest, but also his spiritual bounty, and to graciously thank the Great Provider for His benevolence.

We are fortunate to live in a time of unprecedented material prosperity. Never in history have so many observant Jews possessed so much. But alas, it comes at an exorbitant cost. Our cherished value system, the bedrock of our existence and perpetuity, is under siege. It is daily assaulted and ravaged by the dross of a corrupt secular culture that encircles and threatens to engulf us. The gravest danger is when we import alien practices, which clearly compromise and tarnish the spirit of our tradition, and not only rationalize, but blissfully incorporate them into the mainstream of Jewish life. ■

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