



Our Communal Responsibility

קדם שיתקע יברך לשמע קול שופר ... (רמ"א) ... ואין חלוק בין אם יברך לעצמו או שברך לצא ... (שלחן ערוך אורח חיים סימן תקפ"ה, סעיף ב')

Before blowing the שופר one should recite the ברכה of לשמע קול שופר, to hear the sound of the שופר...The שופר notes even if the person blowing the שופר has already fulfilled the מצוה, he should still make this ברכה...

The (סי"ק ה') מושג ברורה explains: Although generally it is better to make the ברכה for oneself if the one who blows the שופר was already יוצא the מצוה, still, it is the מנהג העולם that the one who blows the שופר should make the ברכה.

A possible way to explain this interesting מנהג is based on the rule of ערבות, responsibility for another Jew. The reason that one can make a ברכה for another Jew is based on the fact that we are all responsible for one another. Our responsibility for another Jew performing מצוות is the same as our own responsibility for ourselves. We have a share in the מצוה of a fellow Jew that entitles us to make a ברכה for him. On ראש השנה our תשובות are greatly enhanced by adding the extra feeling that we are caring for one another's מצוות.

This is also demonstrated by another הלכה. We don't blow שופר when ראש השנה falls on שבת. We give up the protection of the שופר for the whole year because we are concerned that one simple Jew might accidentally make a mistake and carry the שופר on שבת. The מצוה of caring for another Jew is a greater protection than blowing the שופר.

This is true not only when it comes to caring for another Jew's מצוה; of course, it also applies to our concern for another Jew's גשמיים, material needs.

Normally, R' Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik זצ"ל, the Brisker Rav, would avoid answering questions in הלכה, but when it came to questions touching on פקודת נפש (danger to life), he would make an exception. As יום כפור approached, the רב would make himself more accessible to people who had questions regarding the fast. When a

situation required it, he would even send a messenger to a person who the רב knew intended to fast in spite of his poor health. The messenger would inform the person that the רב ruled that he was prohibited from fasting.

The רב's general rule followed the opinion of his father, R' Chaim: Anything may be done to minimize the danger to a sick person. Where there is a question of danger to life, if eating normally would benefit the ill person's health, then none of the stringencies — such as eating small measures (less than a שיעור according to הלכה) — applied.

One year, the רב called the head of the sanitarium for tuberculosis-stricken patients in the מקור חיים neighborhood and told him that, for the sake of his patients' health, he must feed them fresh, hot food on יום כפור, so that they would eat their fill.

The man, a simple, honest Jew from Hungary, could not imagine doing such a thing on יום כפור — to cook and serve hot food? He responded that it would be too difficult for him. Only if he would hear such instructions from the רב of Pressburg, R' Akiva Sofer, would he be prepared to carry out the order.

Upon hearing this, the רב sent a letter to the רב of Pressburg, requesting that he send the man written instructions. Indeed, R' Akiva Sofer sent a letter to the head of the sanitarium, affirming that he agreed with the Brisker רב's ruling that fresh, nourishing food must be served to the patients on יום כפור.

The רב was still doubtful whether the director would be able to bring himself to carry out his instructions and sought a way to ensure that the ruling would be obeyed. On יום כפור itself, one of the רב's close תלמידים, who learned in the ישיבה, volunteered to go on foot all the way from גאולה to מקור חיים, near Talpiot, to see with his own eyes that fresh food was indeed being cooked for the patients for the sake of their health.

Adapted from: Torah MITzion — Rabbi Ben Zion Sobel

Special end of year message from our devoted editorial staff ...

As יום כפור closes in, the devoted editorial staff of this publication would like to take this opportunity to bentch all of כלל ישראל with a year of רפואות, and a גמר חתימה טובה!

Questions of the week

1. Why would the Hebrew word שער, which is translated as hair, also be used to describe fear?
2. What did כלל ישראל intend to do in order to prevent the impending death of משה?



1. When a person is frightened, his hair bristles and stands up on end (לא נראה).
[see תנ"ך תהיה נראה] [see תנ"ך תהיה נראה] [see תנ"ך תהיה נראה]
2. Although no meals will be eaten on יום כפור, nevertheless, the tables should be covered in honor of the holy day, just as they are on שבת.

Halacha Corner

הלכות עניי דיומא:
(עבר) יום כפור

- Although no meals will be eaten on יום כפור, nevertheless, the tables should be covered in honor of the holy day, just as they are on שבת.
- The tables in the shul should be covered as well.

Reviewed by R' Gedalyahu Eckstein

*Since we only discuss a few הלכות, it is important to consider these הלכות in the context of the bigger picture. Use them as a starting point for further in-depth study.

Focus on Middos

Dear תלמיד,

R' Akiva Eiger זצ"ל was extremely reluctant to serve as the Chief Rabbi of Posen and only agreed because his mother asked him to accept the position. His uneasiness about having to tell others what to do is recorded in a personal letter. In it, he reveals that he is מתפלל on the ימים נוראים that ד' will release him from his position.

He had an important guideline from which he did not deviate. The city of Posen was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire and he wouldn't answer questions that came from outside the country. He would explain to petitioners that answering their question would be improper. The stature of other רבנים would be diminished if all of their קהלות sent their questions to an out-of-country רב.

However, once he did reply to a letter from Bialystock, Poland. His תשובה began: "Although I am unworthy of answering questions from distant lands that are filled with great בעלי הלכה and רבנים, surely Poland is not lacking in either, this time I will answer."

He then proceeded to

explain why he deviated from his usual practice in this particular case. "A few months ago, I was at a שמחה at which someone from your town said that he would write me concerning a difficult matter. Although I did not encourage him to do so, I also did not discourage him. In fact, I may have even nodded my head slightly. That nod may have been taken as a commitment to answer the question. If I appeared to have agreed, I do not want to appear as if I changed my mind on a commitment."

My תלמיד, why did R' Akiva Eiger's questionable nod override his concern for the honor of the Polish רבנים? R' Akiva Eiger explained clearly in his letter that this was an exception. Even though he was an ענו, a modest person, he was fully aware of his greatness ... He חלול ד' that any possible ד'פסקון overrides his personal humility. We, too, must not be too humble and think, "Who notices what I do?" We all represent a תורה בן to the outside world!

זהי זכרו ברוד!

רבני Your בדידות

Story adapted from R' Shimon Susholz, זצ"ל



Understanding Davening

השיבונו ד' אליך ונשובה ...

Bring us back to You, ד', and we shall return...

The גמרא (יומא פו:) teaches us the amazing power of an individual's sincere תשובה. The גמרא says in the name of R' Meir: תשובה is so powerful that if one does תשובה, the sins of the whole world are also forgiven. R' Akiva Eiger explains הר"ם גליון הש"ס, quoting הר"ם, basing his understanding of the מצות ערבות of ערבות, being responsible for other people's מצות. Just as we are bound together and can be the guarantors for someone else's מצות, if someone else does תשובה, then we are forgiven in his merit! Such is the power of ערבות. This is one of the reasons why all of our תפילות are written in the plural form. We are all bound together as one!

This Week in History

על תנא ר' עקיבא בן יוסף — 3884 תשנ"י died in Caesaria, on the same day that ר' אליעזר בן הורקנוס was born (הדושין עב). He received most of his teaching from הורקנוס and ר' יהושע בן חנניא. His other רבנים included ר' טרפון and ר' אבהו. Some of his famous תלמידים included ר' שמעון בר יוחאי, ר' מאיר בעל הנס, בן שמוע, ר' יהודה בן אלעאי, and יוסי בן הלפתא. When the evil empire of Rome decreed a prohibition on learning תורה in public, עקיבא taught תורה in defiance of their decree. He was caught and sentenced to death. When עקיבא was taken out to be killed, it was קריאת שמע and in his last lesson to his תלמידים he demonstrated the greatness of his devotion and love for ד' by reciting שמע until his נשמה left him with the words ד' אחד — Hashem is One.

The 2nd לוחות were brought down by משה after he twice spent 40 days on behalf of סניי pleading הר סיני restored His goodwill with the דור. עשרה the משה רבינו taught and המדבר 13 attributes of mercy. ד' gave the 2nd לוחות — thereby establishing this day as יום כפור, a time for atonement, forgiveness and תשובה for all future generations.

Sage Sayings

R' Akiva Eiger, זצ"ל, had a very unusual close relationship with all of his תלמידים. He loved each one of them dearly and he treated every one of them with the utmost respect and concern. In the many letters to his students, he never once addressed any one of them as תלמידי (my students). He would say, "ויער ויזי ווער — Who knows which of us learned more from whom?"

Source: Heard from R' Shmuel Waldman שליט"א



LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

A FEW DAYS BEFORE YOM KIPPUR THE BELZER REBBE, R' AHARON ROKEACH, CAME TO VISIT R' AKIVA SOFER. AFTER THEIR DISCUSSION...

BEFORE I LEAVE, PLEASE BENTCH ME!

WHO AM I TO BENTCH THE BELZER REBBE?

YOU ARE A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF THE CHASAM SOFER.

THE BELZER REBBE WOULD NOT GIVE UP, AND WAS NOT SATISFIED WHEN R' AKIVA SOFER TOLD HIM, 'ZOL DER REBBE ZEIN GEBENTCHED! MAY THE REBBE BE BLESSED.'

NO, PLEASE PLACE PUT YOUR RIGHT HAND ON MY HEAD. I NEED YOUR FULL BRACHA!

CHAS V'SHOLOM THAT I SHOULD BENTCH THE BELZER REBBE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...

PLEASE, PLEASE DO A YID A TOIVA...

THE BELZER REBBE KEPT INSISTING AND WOULD NOT RELENT.

YESIMCHA ELOKIM K' EFRAIM... YEVORECHECHA...

NOT LONG AFTER THE BELZER REBBE LEFT, R' AKIVA SOFER LEFT HIS HOME WITH A TALMID TO GO TO THE BEIS HAMEDRASH...

'ZOL DER REBBE ZEIN GEBENTCHED!'

NO! PLEASE PLACE PUT YOUR RIGHT HAND ON MY HEAD AND GIVE ME YOUR FULL BRACHA...

??

THE PAUPER STOOD UP AND CLEARLY FELT VERY HONORED TO GIVE THE BRACHA AS INSTRUCTED.

REBBI, CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT?

I LEARNED THIS FROM THE BELZER REBBE...

IF THE BELZER REBBE ASKED ME FOR SUCH A BRACHA, THEN I CAN SURELY ASK A JEWISH PAUPER FOR THIS KIND OF BRACHA...

R' AKIVA SOFER WAS BORN IN PRESSBURG (BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA), TO R' שמואל בונים (R' OF PRESSBURG, KNOWN AS THE מגיד שו"ת, AND ROCHEL ROSA SOFER. AT THE AGE OF 20 HE WAS APPOINTED TO SERVE AS A מו"ק TOGETHER WITH HIS FATHER. HE RECEIVED שו"ת FROM שו"ת זוסמן שו"ת (HUNGARY). AFTER HIS FATHER'S PASSING, HE BECAME רב AND ראש ישיבה AT THE AGE OF 29. HE WAS A CHARISMATIC PIONEER (HE INITIATED THAT THE ישיבה SHOULD SERVE MEALS) AND HIS ישיבה FLOURISHED, AS DID HIS STATURE. HE WAS APPOINTED ראש OF THE COUNCIL OF ORTHODOX RABBIS IN HUNGARY, WHICH REPRESENTED 300 COMMUNITIES. IN 1939, UPON THE ADVICE OF HIS UNCLE, שו"ת SOFER, HE ESCAPED TO SWITZERLAND, AND FROM THERE, HE IMMIGRATED TO ISRAEL AND SETTLED IN ירושלים. THERE, HE FOUNDED THE ישיבה OF PRESSBURG IN ירושלים, WHERE HE TAUGHT FOR TWENTY YEARS. HE WAS THE AUTHOR OF שו"ת דעת שו"ת. HE ALSO SERVED AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE אגודת ישראל AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE מועצת גדולי ישראל. HIS ESTEEMED תלמידים INCLUDED שו"ת הלוי וואזנר AND ר' שמואל הלוי AND ר' יחיאל פישל אייזנבך AND R' YISROEL OF AMERICA.



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