



THIS WEEK'S EDITION IS DEDICATED BY THE **SILVERMAN FAMILY** IN MEMORY OF **CHAIM BEN ELIYAHU HALEVI AND YECHIEL BEN TZVI HIRSCH**

IT IS ALSO DEDICATED BY **DR. TOMMY KARFUNKEL** ON THE YARTZHEIT OF HIS FATHER, **MOSHE BEN ELIYAHU** (ON THE 7TH OF CHESHVAN)

PLEASE EMAIL US AT TORAHSWEETS@GMAIL.COM TO SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE TODAY! TO DEDICATE AN EDITION, PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR AT (718) 675-9370

NOACH – THE POWER AND NECESSITY OF BELIEVING IN OTHERS

“There are two reasons I don’t trust people,” Mr. Smith told his business partner. “One is I don’t know them – or second, I do know them.”

There are certainly many people who have ruined their reputations due to their poorly made interpersonal decisions. Yet, we often discount all of mankind because we were burned in life, and that can really hurt those whom we have an influence over (like spouses, children, and employees). Research shows that believing in someone can help them excel, and tragically, the opposite is also true. When we express belief in another’s potential, it can trigger a dopamine release, the neurotransmitter associated with reward and motivation. Dopamine makes one feel good, and it also increases focus and drive.

The Parsha (Bereishis 7:7) states that Noach went into the Teivah (Ark) *“MiPnei Mei HaMabul - due to the waters of the flood”*. **Rashi** (ibid.) comments on this Pasuk that Noach, too, *“was one of those of little faith; he believed but didn’t believe fully that the flood would come.”* Therefore, Noach did not enter the Teivah until he saw with his own eyes that the waters of the flood had started to fall. Rashi’s explanation raises a very difficult problem: How could Noach, who was the biggest Tzaddik of his generation, comparable to Avraham (though not as great as Avraham), have even the smallest doubt that the words of Hashem would be fulfilled?

Rav Yitzchak of Vorki interprets what Rashi means. Of course, Rashi did not assert that Noach had faulty faith! Rashi’s observation goes as follows: *“Even Noach believed in those of little faith,”* and contended that they would repent before the flood came. Therefore, *“(Noach) did not believe that the flood would come.”* He saw goodness in people that everyone had given up on. Noach knew that if people repented, Hashem would have no basis for destroying the rest of mankind. As such, he didn’t give up until the water pushed him in, all because he believed in mankind. However, this substantial atonement never happened, and Hashem was “forced” to cleanse the world through the flood. The question is, knowing how important it is, what mindset can we adopt that can truly strengthen our belief in others?

Perhaps the answer lies in the daily morning prayer that we say, *“Modeh Ani – I offer thanks before You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faith in me is great.”* We have faith in Hashem, not vice versa, so it’s strange to praise Hashem because He has faith in us. **Rav Avraham Kook** (in *Sefer Olas Re’eya*) offers a brilliant insight: By granting man life to begin an entirely new day with the ability to accomplish great things, Hashem displays His deep belief in man. Man does not wake up accidentally each morning; rather, he awakes because Hashem places His faith in man. If Hashem believes in people - and He knows everything about them, including their flaws and dark secrets - who are we to discount others based on our VERY limited perspective?

When we see someone facing a difficulty, feeling doubt or fear, starting something important, or simply lacking motivation/reassurance, we need to step up and feed them lines that can help them take off. First, there should be a reminder of how much Hashem believes in them (as we saw above). “Hashem loves you” stickers are all the rage nowadays for a reason! When our opinion carries weight with a person, something quick and encouraging can do wonders. If a person is making a presentation, we can say, “You’ve got this, and everything will go just fine today!”

If someone needs emotional backing, we can say, “Honestly, I support you fully in whatever decision you make.” Finally, if someone is working on overcoming a challenge, we can say, “I am truly inspired by the fight/bravery you are showing.” Of course, none of this works if we haven’t imbued ourselves with a healthy dose of self-esteem and know that every word, we say can make the biggest difference, even if it doesn’t look like it. So, let us take the opportunities that are readily available to compliment others and express how proud we are of something specific they have done. This can only help others live up to the image and potential we see in them.



HALACHA HONEYCOMBS BY RABBI MOSHE KLEIN **NOACH: IS ONE EVER ALLOWED TO CURSE?**

Imagine Reuven’s friend, Shimon, asks him to invest a significant amount of money in his business. Reuven does it wholeheartedly, only to discover that Shimon is a fraudster who makes off with 100,000 dollars, all the money that Reuven saved up. This leaves Reuven with a dreadful feeling and severe financial loss. Reuven could take Shimon to Beis Din (court) but suppose that Shimon ran away. The question we would like to ask is whether Reuven could curse Shimon.

This question has a basis in this week’s Parsha. Hashem tells Noach that He will be destroying the world. The Pasuk (Bereishis 9:13) states: *“Hashem said to Noach, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth has become full of robbery because of them, and behold I am destroying them from the earth.’”* Even though the people were doing many terrible sins in those days, **Rashi** (ibid., quoting the Gemara [Sanhedrin 108a]) tells us their verdict was sealed only because of chamas (robbery). Immorality wasn’t enough, but stealing was the straw that broke the camel’s back.

The **Vilna Gaon**, ZT”L, makes a fascinating observation based on the Midrash (31:4). The Pasuk (Iyov 35:9) states: *“Because of the many oppressed ones, they cause [people] to cry out; they cry for help from the arm of the great.”* The Midrash explains that the Pasuk could be divided to address two groups of people: the thieves and their victims. The victims are crying and cursing their oppressors. When the Pasuk states that “they cry out from the arm of the great”, it’s referring to the perpetrator crying out because they were cursed by the victim.

We see that there is power and potency in cursing another; as the Midrash teaches us, there is something called *Chimus Devarim*. There is a wickedness to words, and the Midrash tells us that the victims’ curses led to the perpetrators’ fates being sealed to be killed. →

The Pasuk (Mishlei 10:6) tells us that *“blessings [shall come] upon the head of a righteous man, but violence shall cover the mouth of the wicked people.”* The word used in the Pasuk is Chamas, which, according to the Vilna Gaon, means cursing. He teaches that a righteous person is busy blessing others, and due to this Hashem blesses the righteous one. Even just thinking about blessing someone in the “head of the righteous man” results in a tzaddik being blessed.

Conversely, a rasha (evildoer) who says bad things about others results in curses being brought on his own head. The Vilna Gaon writes that “it’s the mouth” of the wicked that becomes their undoing. It must be pointed out that Hashem is lenient in that just thinking bad things upon someone does not result in the wisher being cursed. Articulating the curse, however, activates the weapon against the one firing it. We also see in the Pasuk that the righteous is in the singular tense while the wicked are mentioned in the plural. This is because for the wicked to be cursed, he needs to speak it to another person. The Vilna Gaon teaches us that the word chamas doesn’t only mean stealing, but also cursing. The reason why the world was destroyed was that it was divided into two categories: those who stole and those who cursed the thieves, which ricocheted back on the victims’ heads.

There is an important lesson here for us to realize how powerful our blessings and curses could be. According to the Gra, one would not be allowed to curse someone who wronged him financially. If one does curse, he will end up destroying himself instead of the subject of his curse. There is a strong question on this. If cursing other people is so bad for the one who is cursing, why do we find so many instances of Dovid Hamelech uttering curses?

For example, there is a story in Shmuel Beis. Avner had come to make peace and unite the Jewish people under Dovid, and Dovid had guaranteed him safe passage. Yoav, seeking revenge for Avner killing his brother, Asael, in a prior battle, assassinated Avner in Chevron. Furious because of the bloodshed, Dovid declared himself and his kingdom innocent before Hashem and then cursed Yoav. Dovid said (Shmuel II: 3:29): *“May [the guilt] fall upon the head of Yoav and all his father’s house. May his family always suffer from a discharge or from Tzara’as; he should walk with a cane and be poor.”* Perhaps, in this case, Dovid was acting like a judge and was visiting a penalty on Yoav’s indiscretions.

However, there are other instances in Sefer Tehillim. For instance, it (Tehillim 55:17) states regarding Do’eg, who committed a rebellion against the king: *“May He incite death upon them; may they descend to the grave alive.”* Also, (ibid. 109:8-10), when addressing his enemies, Dovid states: *“(Since they spoke falsehood against me) May his days be few and may someone else take his office of dignity. May his sons be orphans and his wife a widow. May his sons wander, and [people] should ask and search from their ruins.”* Dovid was the father of Shlomo Hamelech, and Shlomo was the one who wrote that one who curses gets cursed himself. As such, why would Dovid engage in cursing others?

Perhaps an answer could be that there is a difference between someone who steals from a person versus someone who tries to kill a person. One should not wish that a thief should drop dead. Yet, someone who pursues physically murdering a person warrants such a retaliation. This topic requires more contemplation, so if any of our readers have more explanation about this, please don’t hesitate to reach out with your insights. *Rabbi Klein can be reached at rabbikleinsih@gmail.com*

Every Motzei Shabbos for the past two years, Mr. Zoltitzky would walk into Avos U'Banim with a feeling of dread in his heart. He loved his son, and he wanted desperately to have a meaningful learning experience with him. Yet, as his son sat across from him reading the Gemara, Mr. Zoltitzky would inevitably find himself looking around the room. At one table, a father and son were going back and forth over a difficult Tosafos. At another, a father was explaining a complicated sugya (topic) to his son. All around him were fathers who seemed so much more comfortable learning Gemara, so much more knowledgeable, so much more capable of giving their sons an engaging learning experience. Mr. Zoltitzky would think to himself, “I just don’t have that background. I don’t have the skills. I wish I could give my son what these fathers are giving their sons, but I simply can’t.”

Three tables over sat Reb Mendel. Rabbi Mendel had no problem learning Gemara. In fact, every Motzei Shabbos he arrived at *Avos U'Banim* imagining how wonderful the learning would be. However, within a few minutes, things would begin to unravel. His son would make the same mistake again. Rabbi Mendel would correct him. His son would become frustrated. Rabbi Mendel would become impatient.

Before long, the learning had turned tense and then Rabbi Mendel would look around the room. He would see fathers laughing with their sons. He would see boys leaning comfortably across the table toward their fathers. Everyone else seemed to be enjoying this beautiful father-son experience, while at his table there was frustration and tension. Rabbi Mendel would think to himself, “Why can’t I do that? Maybe I’m just not wired that way. Maybe I’m not the kind of father who knows how to connect with his son.” Mr. Zoltitzky and Rabbi Mendel were struggling with very different things. One questioned his learning. The other questioned his ability to connect. Yet underneath it was the exact same thought: “I don’t have what it takes to impact my son.” There was lots of self-doubt.

Remarkably, the Kedushas Levi speaks to this point in a remarkable explanation of Chazal’s description of Noach as *miktanei amanah*, someone lacking in faith (Rashi, Bereishis 7:7, s.v. mipnei mei hamabul). How could Noach, whom the Torah itself calls an *ish tzaddik tamim* (Bereishis 6:9), a righteous and pure man, be described as lacking emunah? How could those two descriptions co-exist?

The **Kedushas Levi** explains that Noach certainly believed in Hashem. What he lacked was sufficient belief in himself. Noach did not fully recognize the power that he, as a tzaddik, possesses. He did not believe that his tefillos (prayers) could actually overturn the decree and save his generation. In his humility, he thought, “Who am I? What can my tefillah possibly accomplish? I don’t have the greatness to make an impact on these people. This generation needs to be much better for me to really make a difference.” That, says the Kedushas Levi, was the deficiency in Noach’s emunah.

Over the years, working with parents and adolescents, I have heard versions of that same thought countless times. Sometimes, a parent says it outright, and other times you can simply hear it beneath the surface: “If only I were a stronger learner, I could connect with my son through Torah. If I were more athletic, I could bond with him through sports. If I were a better schmoozer, more charismatic, more patient, or just naturally better at parenting, I could have a greater impact.”

Perhaps there is a parenting lesson hidden in the words of the Kedushas Levi: a parent cannot afford to be *miktanei emanah* in themselves. Part of our emunah in Hashem is having emunah in the parent Hashem chose for our children. Hashem gave us our particular personality, our specific strengths and weaknesses, our precise mind, talents, and abilities. Then, He entrusted us with these given children.

Rav Shimon Schwab, ZT”L, comments on the bracha (blessing) we say every morning, *“She’asah li kol tzorki* - Who has provided me with all that I need.” He points out that we need to recognize that this is a very personalized bracha. We are recognizing that Hashem has given each of us what we need to fulfill the particular mission He has given us. Of course, we need to grow. We need to learn. We need to become better parents, but we don’t need to become somebody else. The Kedushas Levi teaches us that Noach’s mistake was not recognizing how much power Hashem had already placed within him. Perhaps, when we say *“she’asah li kol tzorki”*, it should remind us not to make the same mistake.

IF YOU HAVE A TOPIC THAT YOU WANT RABBI SUTOFSKY TO DISCUSS IN HIS COLUMN, EMAIL US AT TORAHSEEDS@GMAIL.COM.

MILK'N'HONEY FROM JERUSALEM BY RAV JONATHAN TAUB **NOACH – WHY HARAN WAS NOT SAVED**

A remarkable story: Haran died in the presence of his father Terach, in his native land, Ur of the Chaldeans (Bereishis 11:28). **Rashi** gives the background to this event: In the presence of his father Terach – this means during his father's lifetime (Bereishis Rabbah 38:13). The Midrashic explanation is that he died through his father. For Terach accused his son Abram before Nimrod of having smashed his idols to pieces, and he cast him into a fiery furnace. Haran waited and said to himself, "If Abram proves triumphant, I will be on his side; if Nimrod wins, I shall be on his". When Abram was saved, they said to Haran, "Whose side are you on?" Haran replied, "I am on Abram's side". They therefore cast him into the fiery furnace, and he was burnt to death. It seems a little unfair. Haran was willing to be on the side of Avram, against the idolatry of Nimrod and the entire nation. What happened to him? Killed in a fiery furnace. Does he not deserve a little better?

Perhaps the answer is revealed by a close reading of Rashi's words. For a miracle to be performed and thus to survive the fiery furnace, special merits are required. One must demonstrate loyalty to the Almighty. When Haran was asked, "Whose side are you on?" he gave the wrong answer. He replied, "I am on Abram's side." This is seen as following a charismatic leader. The response should have been, "I am on the side of Hashem!" If Haran would have said that, he would have merited being saved! We must ask ourselves, "Are we acting for Hashem, or following others? What is our motivation?" May we merit that our actions are purely for the sake of Hashem!

SUGAR RUSH ON 613 MITZVOS BY R' ELI REIT **MITZVAH # 231 - BURYING THOSE WHO WERE EXECUTED**

When the Beis Din executes someone, they are required to bury him that same day, as the Pasuk (Devarim 21:23) says, "*You shall bury him that day*". Beis Din would typically bury him right before sundown. This mitzva applies, by extension, to all who die. There is, however, an exception for someone who is honored by delaying his funeral. For instance, if one has admirers who need time to travel to his funeral. If one does not have anyone to bury him, everyone who is around is obligated in his burial.

JUST DIP IT
TOIVELING SERVICE

Are you getting married soon?
Do you know anyone getting married?
Do you have dishes you need to Toivel?
WHY SHLEP IT?
I will pick up, toivel, and return everything to you.
Fast, courteous, and prompt service.

Contact Jonathan Terebelo
Call: 917.731.1020
Email: JTerebelo@aol.com



SUGARY SAYING OF THE WEEK BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER

"Everyone is created equally to serve Hashem, but we get different sets of tools."

When the people in Bavel turned against Hashem, they decided to build a tower to "fight" against Him. The Pasuk (Bereishis 11:3) says that they baked the earth to make bricks to build with. **Rashi** explains that in that place there were no stones, so they had to build with bricks only. Why did the Pasuk tell us that they needed to find a different way to build?

Perhaps this is to teach us that when we do Mitzvos we can't say, "I don't have that tool to do it." There are other ways to do Mitzvos, and we must figure it out. At the same time, when we don't have that tool, it's because Hashem wants us to build with a different set of tools. That's the challenge of that day. Let's try to serve Hashem in whichever situation He puts us in, and not look down upon someone whose job is to serve Him with a different "set of tools".

DELICIOUS DVAR BY RABBI DOVID ORLOFSKY **NOACH - THE DANGERS OF UNITY**



There are three major stories of destruction in the Torah. One is the disaster of Sedom, two is the Mabul (Flood), and three is the Dor Haflagah, which is discussed in this week's Parsha. The Dor Haflagah (lit. "the generation of the division") was when a group of people constructed the Tower of Babel and, as punishment, were dispersed throughout the world. What exactly did they do that was so terrible? Our Sages tell us that they were trying to get the entire world to serve Avodah Zarah, but it doesn't say that in the Parsha. It says they were getting together to build one city and one tower; everyone spoke one language, and they were all united in this purpose. So, what was the danger here?

We know that the Jewish people's story is the story of all mankind. We did not start with the Jewish people. The Christian calendar begins with the birth of Yoshka, while the Muslim calendar begins with Mohammad's "first vision" from Allah that becomes the Quran. Ours starts with the creation of the first human being, and everybody is in our story. Non-Jews get roles to play, as well. As such, in the first two Parshyios, which span 2,000 years, there are no Jews to be seen. Avraham becomes the first Jew; he makes his appearance in next week's Parsha. Until then, the Torah was concerned with world history. Avraham was Ha'ivri - He was on "ever echad" (one side), and the entire world was on the other side. He was literally the first iconoclast. Avraham broke the icons and the statues. He went around and smashed all the idols. To be able to have individuals, you must, to a certain extent, sacrifice the sense of absolute unity.

Sir Thomas Moore wrote a book called "Utopia," which, of course, is a little bit of a joke, because in Latin, "U" means not; Utopia is a "place", so Utopia means "no place". In this perfect society, there is really no room for freedom of expression. Everybody dresses the same; everybody must act the same, which is basically a precursor to a communist society. The picture on top of the book was a painting of the building of the Tower of Babel, because that's what it was: total unity to the point where we could not breach any exception. There would be no individuality, and if that world was allowed to exist, there could never be an Avraham Avinu. Therefore, Hashem held up a prism to mankind - a prism splits light into seven colors - so this prism split all the languages into 70 languages and spread people around to allow them to develop their own personality/kochos (abilities). This is something that can't happen when we insist on rigid conformity.

Every society has this struggle. How do you guarantee uniformity, and simultaneously, allow room for individual expression? That's ultimately the goal. When we stifle any sense of individual achievement, there is no world. There must be opportunities for individuals so that a Rav Yisroel Salanter can pop on the scene and start a Mussar movement, and many others in history to have been able to revolutionize the way we look at the world. The same thing is especially true if we want to have a Jewish people who are living a different life. That's why Migdal Bavel teaches that absolute uniformity is not necessarily the best way.

**THE LEARNING IN THIS MAGAZINE IS DEDICATED AS A
COMPLETE REFUAH FOR LEEBA MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH**

Summary: The Ramchal said that there are four areas in which one can act with humility. The first is to generally behave in an unassuming manner; the second is to tolerate insults with equanimity. Now he will discuss the third area (as that's what we are up to currently).

The Ramchal writes: "Hating Rabbanus (authority over others) and fleeing from honor: This is an explicit Mishnah (Avos 1:10): 'love work, hate Rabbanus'. They further said: 'One whose heart is frivolous in handing down rulings is a fool, wicked, and arrogant' (Avot 4:7), and 'whoever chases after honor, honor flees from him' (Eruvin 13b), and 'Do not go out quickly to quarrel (Riv)' (Mishlei 25:8) - do not run after rulership. Why not? 'For what will you do in the end' (ibid), the next day people will put questions to you, and what will you answer them?' (Pesikta Rabasi 22:4)." (Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 22)

The world is obsessed with power and control. Often, we may envy people who have achieved positions of authority, but it is a foolish jealousy. Even if the glory of the position does provide one with a sense of well-being, it is not much different than the euphoria the drug addict obtains from narcotics. The good feeling is evanescent; one constantly wants more, one is never satisfied, and the consequences are generally most unpleasant. People who pursue positions of power must have such low self-esteem that they are in such desperate need to have others acknowledge them as worthwhile. Moshe Rabbeinu was the humblest man on earth, and it is characteristic that he struggled to avoid the mantle of leadership (see Shemos 3:10-4:17).

Rabbi Akiva Eiger, ZT"L, was able to study Torah and avoid taking on a rabbinical position because he had a source of income from a dowry. All his belongings were lost in a fire, and he was compelled to accept a rabbinical appointment. He writes: "I would like to find peace, to cast off the yoke of the rabbinate and to be just an average citizen. Only Hashem knows how I despise the position of authority. As soon as our children are independent, my wife has agreed with me that I can take on a position of caretaker of a shul and earn my sustenance there instead of being a rabbi."

Rabbi Avraham Twerski, ZT"L, (in "Lights Along the Way") advises that if what you are looking for is peace and tranquility, do not seek to be master over others. The more people who are subordinate to you, the greater is your burden, since you carry ultimate responsibility for their actions, most of which you cannot control. Rabbi Twerski shared observations from his personal experience. His responsibilities as the director of a large psychiatric service were more than enough, but when he received a federal grant to expand services and open a large community mental health center, he added a huge staff. At the close of one busy day, the hospital administrator met Rabbi Twerski and said, "You look exhausted. You should hire an assistant." His response was, "One more assistant and I will quit."

The less responsibility you carry for the actions of others, the happier you will be. Glory and power are indeed a lure, but they are very much like quicksand, and the Gemara's statement (Pesachim 87b) resonates so strongly: "Woe unto lordship, for it buries those who possess it." This is why kings did not typically live long lives (also, see how quickly most Presidents age while in office – it's not a pretty sight). *More to come next week, B'Ezras Hashem.*

SHORT STORIES OF THE WEEK BY YONI SCHWARTZ

There was a certain man in Eretz Yisrael who lived in a peaceful area in a quiet apartment building. One day, as he entered the lobby, he saw furniture, beds, sofas, loveseats, recliners, and every kind of furniture imaginable filling the entire space. He had to weave between the various pieces of furniture just to squeeze through and get where he needed to go. One of the residents had decided to open a furniture business in the lobby without consulting anyone else because renting a store was too expensive. The man went to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, ZT"L, and said, "This is eating me alive. I have to squeeze between beds, weave my way through furniture, and hear the commotion of customers when I just want to relax. I want to live a normal life. I want a normal lobby! What this person is doing is completely wrong, and the resentment is eating me alive. On some nights, I even have trouble falling asleep because of it. The chutzpah of this person is unbelievable!"

Rav Chaim responded, "You're right. This man is wrong for doing what he's doing. You can take him to Beis Din, and you will probably win. However, it's always good to go above and beyond - to be *mevater*, to forgive. Sometimes the best thing is to give up on what we want, even when we're right." The man decided to take Rav Chaim's words to heart and let it go, despite the difficulty. The next day, this man's son was having fun near one of the windows when he slipped and fell from the third floor. Luckily, one of the extra fluffy beds was there to break his fall. Had the man not listened to Rav Chaim and instead made a whole tumult, that bed would not have been there the next day to save his son's life. His son walked away unharmed, and the man came away having learned a valuable lesson about the destructive power of resentment - and the incredible greatness of letting things go.

Comment: In this week's parsha, Noach, we learn how Hashem promised to "let go" - to never again wipe out humanity, even if they may deserve it. One of the most difficult feelings that can drive a person to the depths of despair and addiction is resentment. Often, resentments stem from a noble place: "What this person did is not right! That is unjust! I cannot accept that." However, when that prevents us from sleeping at night, it turns from the pursuit of "justice" into the conquest of insanity. Sometimes, trying to always be right is wrong, and the first step to peace is letting things go, even when we're right.

NOACH – THE GIFT OF LOOKING AWAY

After Noach left the Ark, he created a potentially embarrassing situation for himself (see Bereshis 9:21). How did his children react? The Torah says (ibid. 9:22-23): "And Cham saw his father's uncovered state and told his two brothers outside. And Shem and Yafes took a garment, laid it on both of their shoulders, and they walked backwards and covered their father's uncovered state; their faces were turned backwards, and their father's uncovered state they did not see."

Rashi asks why the Pasuk needed to explicitly state that their faces were turned backwards, when it already stated that they walked backwards. In other words, if they were walking backwards to cover their father, don't we automatically realize their faces were turned backwards? What can we learn from the redundancy? Rashi answers that as Shem and Yafes drew near to Noach, they needed to turn their bodies around to get the cover on him. When they did this, they could have glanced at their father in his compromised state, but the Pasuk tells us they did not do this. They purposely turned their heads backwards to ensure Noach's privacy.

On the other hand, Cham acted opposite. He saw his father in a rough spot, and not only did he gaze at his father's uncovered state, but ran to spread the word to his brothers. The results of their choices were Shem and Yafes were blessed, but Cham became cursed forever! What can we learn here that can give us insight into marriage?

I was once at a bank, and the teller proudly shared with me that it was her 40th anniversary. She looked happy, and so, being in the business of helping people grow their Shalom Bayis, I asked her what the secret to her success was. She answered, "To have a happy marriage, you have to know when to have a blind eye and a deaf ear." We can see this from Parshas Noach. Shem and Yafes realized what their father was doing was wrong, but they did not focus on that. It was not about being wrong or right, it was about protecting someone else's feelings. Cham saw his father's mistake, and instead of being sensitive to his father's vulnerable state, he took advantage of him and exploited him. Shem and Yafes turned a blind eye to what Noach was doing, and they continued to treat their father with respect.

Sometimes our spouse does something wrong like overspending, not davening with a minyan, or lowering their standards in some other way. How do we react? Do we act like Cham and, instead of looking away and turning a blind eye and a deaf ear, draw attention to the mistake? Or do we emulate Shem and Yafes and take the advice of the bank teller, turn a blind eye and a deaf ear, while continuing to treat our spouse with respect? If we can keep in mind that Hashem sees all our efforts and that He can turn things around in a moment, it will be easier to emulate Shem and Yafes. May Hashem bless our efforts with success, and may He shine the light of Shalom Bayis into our homes!

DEAR READERS: YOUR FEEDBACK IS SUPER IMPORTANT TO US. WE HAVE ADDED NEW CONTENT. EMAIL TORAHSWEETS@GMAIL.COM WITH YOUR THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS. THANK YOU SO MUCH!