

And a man wrestled with him ... (בראשית לב:כב) ... וַיִּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ ...

The *מדרש תנחומא* records a difference of opinion about who this 'man' really was. The *מדרש* brings one fascinating opinion that *די*, in His mercy, dispatched the angel *מיקאל* in the guise of a shepherd, whose sole purpose was to fight with *יעקב*, who was afraid of *עשו*, in order to encourage *יעקב*. *יעקב*'s victory in the struggle would then give him the confidence necessary to face *עשו* and win. We are commanded (לדברים כח:ט) — *and you shall emulate יד*'s ways. There are times when a kind gesture or nice word can be far more encouraging than we could ever imagine.

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Nachman's son thanked his mother one day and Nachman realized that it changed his wife's entire day tremendously. He decided, then and there, that if a thank you was so powerful, he would thank his *ראש פולל* every day after *שעור*. He appreciated the great effort the *ראש פולל* invested in preparing such a high-level *שעור*.

One evening, just before he left the room, Nachman approached R' Yisrael, as he did every evening, and thanked him.

R' Yisrael did not smile; he sighed. "Reb Nachman," he said, "I want to tell you that if not for you, I would have closed this *פולל* weeks ago." Nachman was sure he had not heard right.

"Reb Nachman," R' Yisrael continued, "I want you to know that those words of thanks that you give me each day may be just that — words. But for me, in my situation these last few months, they were actually lifesaving. They saved me from collapsing under my heavy load. Let me explain.

"You must remember that I was blessed with a son some five months ago. After the birth, my wife went through a difficult time. There were medical treatments for her, as well as a newborn and a family to care for. I fed and clothed the children, did the laundry ... The list is endless. After a day at home, I still had my appointments

at night with *פולל* donors. I knew you all depended on the *פולל* check you receive, and I could not let you down.

"And so I slogged along for one month, wearing myself down completely. I could barely concentrate when I came to *פולל*. By the time the second month came to an end, I was tearing myself to pieces trying to hold up the ends of all my responsibilities. It was getting close to impossible. It was at this point in time that I decided to close the *פולל*; perhaps it would be only for a short time, until my wife recovered, perhaps forever. I knew I could not do everything — and my wife's health definitely had to be my first priority.

"It was around that period when you started thanking me each evening. You may not have realized at the time how those words warmed me. I felt as though someone was revitalizing me, injecting me with a wonderful dose of energy. I felt a bit stronger, a bit more confident. My evenings were a bit lighter, a bit happier.

"And so it continued. Each day, you would leave me with some gentle, kind words. They gave me the impetus to continue trying to juggle my many responsibilities for just one more day, one more week and one more month.

"*ברוך די*, the worst has passed. My wife is almost fully recovered, the children are being cared for by their mother once again, and I ... I am now free again to continue running this *פולל*, the *פולל* that was so close to being closed down. Now we have a new problem with the heating system, and it is difficult to raise more funds, in addition to the usual heavy financial burden. But then I look back at the earlier situation, and I think, 'If I was able to weather those long, impossible days and struggle through such an abundance of difficulties, I will, with *די*'s help, manage now too."

And he did. The *פולל* continues to be successful, all because a boy had said thank you to his mother and his father understood and internalized the value of a thank you.

Adapted from: Making a Difference (with kind permission from Feldheim)

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כלל ו' סעיף ב'

"Detective" Eli was still busy working out who had thrown R' Cohen's clothing into the swimming pool. It seemed very likely that he was onto something and he decided to discuss it with R' Cohen. He claimed that he overheard the culprit admit his prank to some other boys privately. R' Cohen listened to "Detective" Eli and didn't stop him. Afterwards, R' Cohen called in the "culprit" and asked him if he knew who had thrown his clothing into the pool.

Was R' C. permitted to listen and act upon "Detective" Eli's story?

*Stories adapted from Guard Your Tongue, A Daily Companion, A Lesson a Day and various real-life situations. Answer: It is obvious from R' Cohen's question to the "culprit" that although he listened to Eli's report, he did not accept it as the absolute truth. R' Cohen's intention was to rebuke the "culprit" and to prevent additional/future incidents. R' Cohen was, therefore, permitted to listen to Eli's report.

Questions of the week

1. Why did *עשו* change the name of his wife from *אהליבמה* to *יהודית*?
2. Name three categories of people who merit that *הקב"ה* forgives them completely for their sins (מוחלין לו עונותיהם).

1. *איש* wished to mislead *חנה* into assuming that his wife had rejected idolatry (מחלין לו עונותיהם) — 36:2.
2. A) One who becomes a *נביא*, B) one who ascends to a position of greatness, and C) one who gets married. It is for this reason (C) that elsewhere (28:3) *אשר* is referred to as *אשר* (אשר) — 36:3.

1. It is best to place the *מנורה* between 3 and 10 *טפחים* from the ground (i.e., 11.4" to 31.5" based on the strictest *שעור*).
2. Women played an important role in the victory against the *יוונים*, *Greeks*; therefore, they adopted the *מנהג* not to work as long as the *תנאים* lights must burn, i.e., for the first half-hour period.

*Since we only discuss 1-3 *תנאים*, it is important to consider these *תנאים* in the context of the bigger picture. Use them as a starting point for further in-depth study.

Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,
 R' Sholom Schwadron זצ"ל stayed in America until the end of the שבועה of R' Shneur Kotler זצ"ל and was asked to be one of the מספידים of R' Shneur in בית מדרש גבוה.

R' Sholom Schwadron's words rose up in tongues of flame, a powerful and bitterly mournful speech, accompanied by a storm of tears. His message was clear and was relevant to the tragedy. At the conclusion of the הקספד, R' Sholom got into the car that would take him back to where he was staying.

They were nearly halfway there when R' Sholom turned to the driver, who was a close acquaintance of his, and asked him if he had a tape recorder in the car. Receiving an affirmative reply, he took a cassette from his pocket and asked the driver to play it. "They taped my הקספד and gave me a copy of it. I want to listen to it," he said.

R' Sholom sat quietly, listening to his own words. All at once, he began to cry. The weeping grew stronger, the tears falling profusely. The driver was surprised by the

tears and said in a soothing manner, "R' Sholom, you are already in the car. Why do you have to cry so bitterly now?"

The tears dried up. R' Sholom turned to the driver and said, "Let me explain. When a person speaks in front of an audience, it is hard for him to hear himself. He invests a lot of energy in being heard and in arousing his listeners, but he does not manage to internalize the talk for himself. But I, too, want to hear the הקספד for R' Shneur Kotler."

He turned on the tape recorder again. As the car wound its way home, it was filled once more with another storm of emotion as R' Sholom listened to the הקספד.

My תלמיד, this episode explains why R' Shalom's דרשות were נכנסים בקלות, they penetrated through the thick barriers of the heart — his words were מן הלב, flowing from his heart, therefore he could listen to himself and be inspired.

יְהִי זְכוּרְךָ בְרוּךְ!

רבינו, בקדידות

Story adapted from קול חוצב

Understanding Davening

...חיל פרעה וכל זרעו יחדו מאבן במצולה...

...פרעה's army and all his children went down like a stone into the deep sea.

Where do we find that the Egyptian children died along with פרעה's army? R' Bezalel Rakow זצ"ל (Gateshead רב) explained based on a פסוק: וְאֶשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְחֵיל מִצְרַיִם ... יִאָבְדוּ עַד עַד הַיּוֹם — and what He did for the army of Egypt ... and י' caused them to perish until this day (דברים יא:ד). The רמב"ן asks, what is the meaning of the added words until this day? He answers based on a fascinating אגבן. They had to have מְסִירַת נַפְשׁ to carry out their evil, and therefore not only did the men of the Egyptian army die, but so did their offspring. If מְסִירַת נַפְשׁ for wickedness deserves such extreme punishment, imagine the reward of מְסִירַת נַפְשׁ for a מְצַדֵּק!

לעיני ר' משה צבי בן הר"י טוביה הלוי זצ"ל



This Week in History

14th קסלו 5706 / 1945 – The 3rd סיום השי"ס was held just after WWII and dedicated to the memory of the millions of Jews who had perished in the Holocaust. In an act that demonstrated the eternity of תורה and ישראלי, the most heroic סיום השי"ס was the one held by a small group of survivors in the Displaced Persons camp in Feldafing, Germany. In the United States, the סיום השי"ס was commemorated in Boro Park, on Manhattan's West Side and in Detroit. In ארץ ישראל, there were events in תל אביב, חיפה, and ירושלים. The סיום השי"ס was attended by more than 3,000 people, but was delayed one day due to the British-imposed curfew.

15th קסלו 3954 / 193 C.E. – רבי יהודה of יארצייט, also known as ר' שמעון בן גמליאל, הנשיא ללל ישראל, was the leader of ישראל during the tumultuous period following the destruction of the 2nd המקדש. Foreseeing that the תורה needed to be recorded due to the travails of רבי (עת לעשות לדי...), gathered, recorded and organized all the teachings of the previous generations and wrote them in the order of the סדרי משנה and רבי. The Emperor Antoninus had a close friendship and רבי was able to secure many benefits for the Jewish community. Although רבי was extremely wealthy, in his dying hour he lifted both his hands to שמים and swore that he had not benefited from his wealth by even as much as his little finger.

16th קסלו 5564 / 1804 – A raging fire engulfed many homes, including the home and the very room where all of R' Avraham Danzig זצ"ל's (1748-1820) family were standing. Some of the walls of the house collapsed, but no one was hurt. R' Avraham Danzig established this day as a יום טוב (Pulver Purim – Purim of the Gunpowder) for himself and all of his future descendants to mark the miraculous escape.

Sage Sayings

On his last visit to England זצ"ל was 75 years old. He slipped twice, once while in the street and again when he arrived home. ר' שלום מרדכי הכהן שברון זצ"ל asked himself, "נארוואס האב איך געפאלן? — Why did I fall?" He called on the Manchester ראש ישיבה Harav Yehudah Zev Segal, and after an hour he returned smiling. "איך דארף ארבעטן אויף הקצת הטוב? — I need to work on הקצת הטוב!" He had missed the wedding of a child of a close supporter in America. The very next day, he bought a plane ticket and arrived just in time for the last שבע ברכות.

Source: קול חוצב



RABBI YITZCHOK ELCHONON SPECTOR SERVED AS THE RAV IN THE CITY OF KOVNA, RUSSIA, IN THE 1800S. IN THOSE DAYS, BEING DRAFTED INTO THE RUSSIAN ARMY WAS A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY FOR YOUNG AND ABLE YESHIVA STUDENTS.

REBBE, YANKEL HAS BEEN DRAFTED AND NEEDS TO GO FOR HIS PHYSICAL TODAY!



THE HARSH CONDITIONS FOR SOLDIERS IN THE RUSSIAN ARMY PRESENTED ENORMOUS CHALLENGES FOR THOSE WHO WERE SHOMER TORAH UMITZVOS. BECAUSE OF THAT, LEADERS LIKE RABBI YITZCHOK ELCHONON DID EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO HELP THEIR TALMIDIM AVOID THE DRAFT.

שיר המעלות...



RABBI YITZCHOK ELCHONON WAS EAGERLY AWAITING NEWS OF THE FATE OF A PRIZED TALMID NAMED YAAKOV. SUDDENLY, THE DOOR BURST OPEN....

REBBI - I HAVE EXCELLENT NEWS! YAAKOV WILL NOT BE DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY!

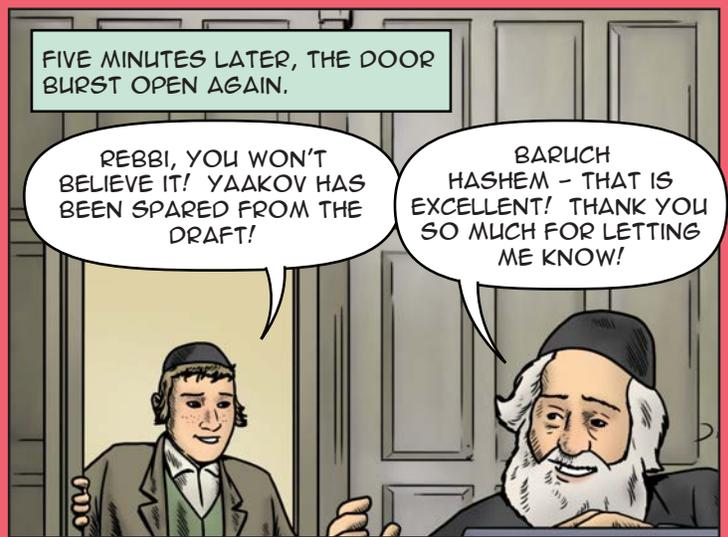
WHAT WONDERFUL NEWS - THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME!



FIVE MINUTES LATER, THE DOOR BURST OPEN AGAIN.

REBBI, YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT! YAAKOV HAS BEEN SPARED FROM THE DRAFT!

BARUCH HASHEM - THAT IS EXCELLENT! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR LETTING ME KNOW!



A SHORT WHILE LATER, YET ANOTHER MESSENGER ARRIVED.

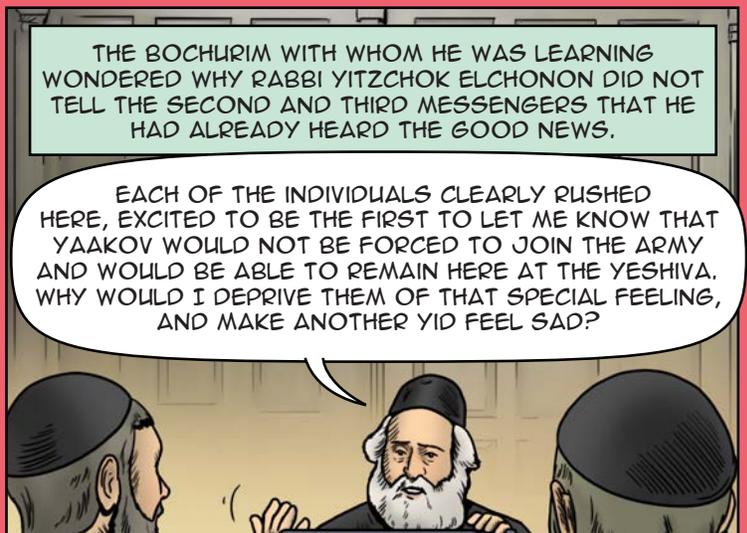
RABBI SPECTOR, I COME WITH GREAT NEWS. BARUCH HASHEM, YAAKOV WILL NOT BE FORCED TO JOIN THE ARMY!

THANK YOU FOR RUSHING HERE TO LET ME KNOW, REB CHAIM. IT IS SO VERY KIND OF YOU!



THE BOCHURIM WITH WHOM HE WAS LEARNING WONDERED WHY RABBI YITZCHOK ELCHONON DID NOT TELL THE SECOND AND THIRD MESSENGERS THAT HE HAD ALREADY HEARD THE GOOD NEWS.

EACH OF THE INDIVIDUALS CLEARLY RUSHED HERE, EXCITED TO BE THE FIRST TO LET ME KNOW THAT YAAKOV WOULD NOT BE FORCED TO JOIN THE ARMY AND WOULD BE ABLE TO REMAIN HERE AT THE YESHIVA. WHY WOULD I DEPRIVE THEM OF THAT SPECIAL FEELING, AND MAKE ANOTHER YID FEEL SAD?



R' YITZCHOK ELCHONON SPECTOR WAS THE 3RD SON OF R' YISRAEL ISSER, RAV OF THE LITHUANIAN TOWN OF ROUSH. HIS MOTHER WAS NIFTAR WHEN HE WAS 10 YEARS OLD. HIS FATHER WAS HIS REBBI. AFTER MARRIAGE TO SARA RAIZEL, DAUGHTER OF R' ELIEZER YEZERSKY, HE MOVED TO VOLKOVISK WHERE HIS FATHER-IN-LAW SUPPORTED HIM. THE TOWN RAV, R' BINYAMIN DISKIN (FATHER OF R' YEHOShUA LEIB), WAS SO IMPRESSED THAT HE LEARNED WITH HIM EVERY DAY. IN 1837, HE ACCEPTED THE OFFER TO BECOME RAV OF ZEBELAN, AND BECAME RAV IN BARAZE IN 1839. HE BECAME RAV OF NOVARDOK IN 1851 AND RAV OF KOVNO IN 1864 HE HELD THIS PRESTIGIOUS POSITION FOR 32 YEARS AND WAS A BELOVED AND REVERED GADOL IN HIS GENERATION. HE AUTHORED BE'ER YITZCHOK, EIN YITZCHOK, AND NACHAL YITZCHOK ON CHOSHEN MISHPAT.

