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Torah Thoughts

ויירא יעקב מאד ויזר לו ...

(בראשית לב: ח) *יעקב was extremely afraid and distressed ...*

When he heard that his brother יעקב was coming with 400 armed men, יעקב went through elaborate preparations (sending gifts, preparing for war and davening) in anticipation of this meeting. Why did יעקב feel the need for all these preparations?

ש"י explains: ויירא — *and he became frightened*, ירע — *perhaps he will be killed*; ויזר לו — *and it distressed him*, הוא את אחרים — *were he to kill others*.

The Dubno Maggid explained this פסוק with the following משל:

There was a certain town with several ill residents, but there was no doctor in the town to treat them. Near this town, however, there was a large city that was home to the governor of the entire district. Unlike the town, the city was fortunate to have a prominent physician to tend to its sick.

There was one person in the small town who was a relative of the governor. One day, this man woke up with a slight headache. Now, it was not a severe headache, and it did not really require any special medical care. Nevertheless, the man began to groan loudly, and sent a message to his relative, the governor, asking him to kindly send the doctor to him in the town.

"Your headache is so minor; why are you groaning so much?" the man's family asked him.

"Don't be foolish," the man responded. "Do you really think that I am groaning for my own sake? I want the doctor to treat all those who are truly ill and suffering greatly. I know that the governor would not send the doctor for their sake. I am therefore pretending to be ill, and I am hoping that the governor will send the doctor for me. Once the doctor arrives, he will be able to provide his services to those in need."

So too, continued the מגיד, there are "small" generations, when the Jewish people do not have enough זכויות, *merits*, to deserve Divine protection. ד' foresaw this and therefore placed our great אבות in situations that would prompt them to daven for the welfare of their children and descendants in all future generations.

יעקב, concluded the מגיד, was certainly capable of defeating יעקב. Yet he beseeched ד', "הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד יעקב — Rescue me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of יעקב ...". (בראשית לב: יב) For even though I can overcome the wicked יעקב, what will be with my descendants?

יעקב, then, was not merely praying for his own survival, but for the survival of all the ensuing generations of Jews as well. This is what the פסוק states in (כ:ב) תהלים, "ענה ד' ביום צרה, ישגבך שם אלקי", "ענה ד' ביום צרה, ישגבך שם אלקי" — *May ד' answer you on the day of distress; may the Name of Yaakov's G-d make you invincible.*

Adapted from: **A Shabbos Vort** (with kind permission from ArtScroll)

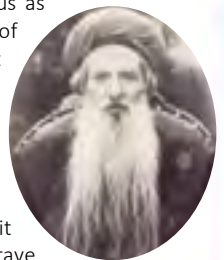
Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

כ"ד כסלו
5593 - 5665
1832 - 1904

ר' חפאל אשר to ירושלים R' Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini, born in ירושלים and Kalu Vida, received סמיכה at age thirteen. Two years after his marriage to רבקה at the age of eighteen, his father was נטר suddenly. After his cousins offered to support him, he moved to Constantinople. Thirteen years later, he moved to the small Ukrainian city of Karasubazar. He served there as רב for 33 years, fighting the forces of the Karaites. It was there that he authored his monumental work, שדי חמד, an eighteen-volume Talmudic and halachic encyclopedia of universal acclaim. At the age of sixty-five, he emigrated back to ירושלים. He lived there for two years before moving to תברון, where he was appointed רב of the city.

Gedolim Glimpses

Medini became famous as one of the most brilliant Sephardic רבנים of his generation. He was revered for his great memory and צדקות; even the Arab inhabitants of תברון accepted him as a holy man. After his burial they tried to steal his body but were caught. In his memoirs, ר' משה, על חומתניף ירושלים, Blau testified to seeing the body in the grave; it was as whole as on the day of burial. The grave was resealed by the קדישה and that day was declared a day of fasting!



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לעיני רבי ישראל בן אברהם ז"ל
לעיני הבע"ש ישיחו דוב ע"ה בן יבלחט"א יצחק צבי נ"י

... היא מצבת קברת רחל עד היום...
 ... it is the monument of Rachel's grave until today. (בראשית לה: כ).

ד' explains (מ"ח: ו ד"ה וְאֶקְבְּרָה שָׁם) that רחל was told by ד' to bury רחל on the side of the road. When בני ישראל went into exile, they would pass by her tomb. רחל would emerge from her grave and weep... ד' answers her, *יש שכר למעלתך*, *There is reward for your act...* and *ושבו בנים לגבולם*, *and the children shall return to their borders...* רחל relinquished the opportunity to be יעקב's first wife in order to save her sister from embarrassment. ד' gave רחל a special כח for this act, and only she will be able to successfully *daven* for the גאולה.

א א א א

The following story was heard from R' Shalom Schwadron זצ"ל:

As a young man, R' Chaim Chizkiyahu Medini, author of *שְׂדֵי חַדָּם*, a multi-volume encyclopedia of the גמרא and its commentaries, studied in a כולל which consisted of a small group of אברכים, who were all תלמידי חכמים in their own right. R' Medini was known as the brightest among them. There was one אברך who was extremely jealous of R' Medini. He tried to convince others that R' Medini was not as great as people thought.

One day, the benefactor told his group that he would be leaving on a lengthy business trip. This was the opportunity that the jealous אברך was waiting for. He approached the benefactor's maidservant and paid her to spread a false rumor that R' Medini had behaved inappropriately. Tempted by the money, the maidservant happily spread the evil rumor.

Unfortunately, some people believed that this "holy" young man was not the "angel" they had thought him to be. The jealous אברך organized the members of the כולל to confront the benefactor's wife and insist that she expel R' Medini from the כולל. She refused to believe the story and decided to wait until her husband returned.

All this time, R' Medini, concerned for the שמים and the great חלול ד', remained silent. Upon the benefactor's return, a group of

אברכים visited him and explained the situation. Although shocked by what he heard, he did not act hastily. He went to the בית מדרש that housed his כולל and walked up front to the ארון הקודש, fixing his gaze on the accused man. R' Medini felt the benefactor's glare examining him from head to toe, but he just continued his learning in complete devotion and piety. Everyone waited with bated breath to hear the benefactor's ruling. Finally it came.

"This young man," he said, "is holy and pure. I hereby decree that any אברך who dares to even speak against him anymore will be expelled from my כולל immediately!" Having said that, the righteous בעל הבית went home and promptly fired his maidservant.

Before long, the maidservant used up the money she had been given by the jealous אברך and, without a job, she soon found her life to be extremely difficult. No one wanted to hire her, since everyone knew that she had been fired by her former boss. She returned to the jealous אברך for help, but he refused to even speak with her.

Desperate, she shamefully approached R' Medini. Crying bitterly, she admitted her guilt. She told him that she was willing to go public and tell the truth if he would speak to her former boss. R' Medini thanked ד' for providing him the opportunity to prove himself completely innocent.

But then he thought, what would he accomplish by exposing the other אברך? People would talk about the terrible things another תלמיד had done – to slander an innocent colleague out of jealousy. It would still be a terrible חלול ד'!

R' Medini told her to hold her tongue. He would go with her to another בעל הבית in town to hire her. He did exactly that, and the woman was employed once again. Walking home, R' Medini felt that something had changed within. From then on, he saw phenomenal progress in his learning. He became a גדול בתורה, and his ספר, *שְׂדֵי חַדָּם*, is studied around the world.

Adapted from: R' Shalom Schwadron זצ"ל

Chofetz Chaim Moment

ספר ח"ח הלכות לשון הרע כולל ח' סעיף ט'

*Avi was learning in the ישיבה library when Eli walked in. Eli went through the index cards to find a particular ספר and then walked to the bookshelf. Avi, who was a 'genius ספרים', noticed the ספר that Eli picked up and, as usual, began giving an historical overview of the author's lifetime. He then began comparing the author to the other גדולים who lived over 150 years ago and how the author's תורה was sorely lacking in depth compared to the other famous גדולים.

Is there any לשון הרע about גדולים who have passed away?

*Stories adapted from Guard Your Tongue, A Daily Companion, A Lesson a Day and various real-life situations.

Answer: A common mistake that people make is to freely speak about deceased גדולים. A common mistake that people make is to freely speak about deceased גדולים. A common mistake that people make is to freely speak about deceased גדולים.

Questions week

1. What was אצטנ'ס reason for changing the name of his wife from יהודית to אהליבמה?
2. Name three categories of people who merit that הקב"ה forgives them completely for their sins (מוחלין לו עונותיו).

1. Even at a time when it was the custom for people to give a dowry to their daughters when they got married, אצטנ'ס treated them as if they were strangers and gave them *חטולות* (אמא אצטנ'ס מ"א) — 31:17. 2. אהליבמה placed his wife's first husband's name on her dowry since it is considered immodest for a woman to walk behind a man (אמא אצטנ'ס מ"א) — 31:17.

Halacha Corner

הלכות עניני ד'ומא: משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם

- 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).
- Women played an important role in the victory against the יוונים; therefore, they adopted the מנהג not to work as long as the הנקבה lights must burn, i.e., for the first half-hour period.

*Since we only discuss 1-3 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 Talmid,

A businessman once borrowed a large sum of money from **ר' חיים חזקיהו** Medini's **צ'צ'ל** (free loan fund). This man was known to be a trustworthy person who paid off his debts promptly. This time seemed to be no exception, and the first few installments were repaid on time. Then the payments suddenly stopped, and **ר' חיים** did not see the man for a long while.

ר' חיים's usually glowing countenance turned clouded with worry — not over the loss of money, but over the loss of the **מְצוֹן** of lending money to the poor. The man's delay of payment meant that others would now be deprived of loans.

One day, **ר' חיים** met the borrower in the street. The **חכם** asked the man kindly, "Is there any reason why we have not seen you these past few months?"

"I was under a lot of pressure," the man replied.

ר' חיים turned pale. "What have I done?" he asked himself. "I have transgressed the **אסור דאורייתא** of **לא תונו**, not to

pressure those who owe money!"

He immediately called three Yidden who were standing nearby and said before them, "I hereby ask **מחילה** from this man because I acted improperly as a creditor."

The borrower was astounded by **ר' חיים's** humility. "Shouldn't I be the one to ask forgiveness for not keeping my word?"

ר' חיים answered him: "You were forced by your circumstances ... but I oppressed you; please forgive me."

ר' חיים refused to budge until the man called out, "**מחול**! **לך** — you are forgiven!" In fact, only after he had begged for **מחילה** three times — and had been forgiven three times — was **ר' חיים** satisfied.

ר' חיים חזקיהו, **תלמיד** My could help others with the **גמ"ח** funds; however, it was more important that he should not even come close to committing a sin against the borrower.

יהי זכרו ברוך!

רבי Your
בגידות,
Story adapted from **A Legacy of Leaders**
Yehuda Azoulay

Sage Sayings

ר' חיים חזקיהו Medini, **שדי חמד**, was walking in the street on an **שבת**. An Arab came from behind and forcefully bumped the **חכם**, nearly knocking him down. Angry bystanders moved towards the Arab. **ר' חיים** stopped them and said [in his native tongue], "**לאן אים אפ! סיאני א אנוניז פון דעם רבונו של עולם תשובה צו** — **טאן!** Leave him alone; this is an indication from **ד' to [arouse me to] do תשובה**." The Arab was so astounded by his words that he fell on his knees and kissed the hem of **ר' חיים's** coat.

Source: Heard around the **שבת** table

Understanding Davening

ועל הנסים... בימים ההם בזמן הזה...

And for the miracles...in those days, at that time...

In the literal sense, this phrase can be understood to mean that we are thanking **ד'** for the miracles of **הנקה** (and **פורים**) that occurred to our forefathers (**בימים ההם** — in those days) during this season (**הזמן הזה** — at this time). The **לבושי**, however, understands this phrase differently. It contains a double measure of praise: for the miracles of the past (**בימים ההם** — in those days) and also for the countless hidden miracles that are being performed constantly for us every day (**הזמן הזה** — at this time) to preserve our life and health. For the miracles that have happened **הבימים ההם**, we include in our celebration a "thank you" for all the continuous daily miracles that are happening **הזמן הזה!**

לעיני ר' משה בן הר' טוביה הלוי זצ"ל

This Week in History

19th קאלן 5533 / 1772 — **יאראצניט** of **דוב בער** ר' **מגיד** of Mezeritch, the **ממוריש** of, and successor to, the founder of **חסידות** **טוב**, **ישראל בעל שם טוב**, Born in Lukatch (in 1704 or 1710) to **אברהם** ר', he was descended from a descendant of **און** ר' **יוחנן הסנדלר** and **האי גאון** ר', who was a descendant of **הושע** ר' **דוב בער** in Lemberg. In 1752, he became the **שם טוב's** closest **תלמיד**.

His **תלמידים** included: the **Rebbe** ר' **שמאל שמואל** and his brother ר' **בעל הקלעה** (the **פנתס** of **הורוביץ**); **אלימלך** ר' **אלימלך** of Lizhensk and his brother ר' **לוי יצחק** (נועם **אלימלך**) of Berditchev; **אלימלך** ר' **שניאור זלמן** of Chernobyl; and **אלימלך** ר' **אלימלך** of Liadi, among others. His son was **אברהם** ר' **אברהם** (1740-1766). The classic anthologies of his teachings are **אור**, **תורה אור**, **לקוטי אמרים** and others.

דוב בער ר' led the Chassidic movement from 1761 until his passing. He consolidated Chassidic teachings into a structured, cohesive movement. One idea he emphasized was the importance of clinging to **ד'** in all one's actions — business, social and religious. The Maggid also taught about perfecting one's soul in order to bring about the redemption of the world. Today, tens of thousands of **חסידים** trace their spiritual roots back to the Maggid of Mezeritch.



ONE DAY AFTER DAVENING, THE TZEHEMER ROV LOOKED AROUND AND NOTICED THAT ONE OF THE MISPALELEM LOOKED SAD.

CHATZKEL, YOU SEEM WORRIED. IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?

OH, HASHEM! MAYBE THIS IS MY YESHUAH!

REBBE, I HAVE A LOAN OF \$800 DUE IN THREE DAYS - AND I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY RIGHT NOW!

*HELP

PLEASE GIVE ME A BRACHA THAT SOMETHING WILL WORK OUT.

DON'T WORRY, HASHEM WILL HELP YOU PAY THE LOAN ON TIME.

EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS WAS CONSIDERED A HUGE SUM AT THAT TIME, WHEN MONTHLY RENT WAS \$50 OR \$60 A MONTH. THE ROV SPENT THE ENTIRE DAY ON THE PHONE CALLING ALL THE PEOPLE HE KNEW.

I PLEDGE SIX DOLLARS.

CHAIM, THANK YOU. MAY YOU BE GEBENCHED. THIS IS A SPECIAL CASE; PLEASE SEND OVER MONEY TODAY!

THE NEXT MORNING, THE ROV HAD A PLAN. HE DAVENED EARLY AND WAITED FOR CHATZKEL TO PUT DOWN HIS TALLIS BAG AT HIS USUAL PLACE IN SHUL BEFORE HE WENT DOWNSTAIRS TO USE THE MIKVEH.

CHATZKEL RETURNED AND OPENED HIS TALLIS BAG AND AN ENVELOPE DROPPED OUT.

WHAT IS THIS? EXACTLY \$800! AND WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NOTE FROM THE REBBE! THANK YOU, HASHEM!

...THE REBBE LITERALLY SAVED MY LIFE!

YOU ARE WELCOME... HASHEM IS THE ONE TO THANK! I WAS JUST A SHALIACH. THIS MONEY IS NOT A LOAN. WHEN HASHEM HELPS AND YOU HAVE THE MONEY, YOU SHOULD LEND IT TO OTHERS IN NEED.

R' LEVI YITZCHOK GRUNWALD ז"ל WAS BORN IN CHUST, CZECHOSLOVAKIA (TODAY RUSSIA), TO R' MOSHE (ערוגת הנוטם), A TALMID OF THE KSAV SOFER AND THE REBBI OF R' SHRAGA FEIVEL MENDLOWITZ. THE FAMILY TRACED THEIR LINEAGE BACK TO R' MEIR OF EISENSTADT (פניני מנירות), A DESCENDANT OF THE MAHARAL MPRASHE, WHO CAME FROM יו"ד הנילך. HE MARRIED HIS NIECE, SILKA, DAUGHTER OF HIS OLDEST BROTHER R' AVROHOM YOSEF. HE RECEIVED SMICHAH FROM R' SHMUEL ENGEL, R' MORDECHAI LEIB WINKLER (לבושי מרדכי) AND R' SHMUEL ROSENBERG (באר שבע). AT AGE 28, HE SERVED AS רב FIRST IN OPALYA (פאפ), HUNGARY, THEN IN WISHK, AND LATER IN ORSHIVA, BEFORE BEING APPOINTED AS רב IN TZEHEM, AUSTRIA, IN 1931. IN 1939, THE REBBE ESCAPED FROM AUSTRIA AND CAME TO THE US, WHERE HE REBUILT THE TZEHEMER YESHIVA. HE WAS RENOWNED FOR HIS HUMILITY, חסד, AND חבת שלום. HE AUTHORED MISDOLOS MERKUCHIM.

