

A Joke With A Lesson

On Yom Kippur night, a kidnapper ran into a shul and kidnapped the Rabbi, the chazzan, and Yossel, a regular guy who somehow got stuck in the middle of all this.

The kidnapper looked at the Rabbi. "What's your last wish?"

The Rabbi said, "The whole year I prepared a special Yom Kippur speech. Please let me give the entire speech before I go."

The chazzan quickly added, "And I've been preparing my chazzanus all year! Please let me sing all the pieces I've been working on."

The kidnapper turned to Yossel. "And what's YOUR last wish?"

Yossel didn't even think twice and said, "PLEASE, shoot me first...!!"

What's The Lesson? Yom Kippur is a day to "make a last wish"; it's a day when all is signed- what will happen!

Let us use up the day, and not just look at the clock for when the fast will end; rather, how much more time we have to grab from this holy day!

Dovi was driving down the highway, relaxing and listening to a shiur, when his cellphone rang.

"DOVI!?" said his wife, sounding very nervous. "I just heard on the news that there's a car going the **WRONG WAY** on the highway. Please be careful!"

Dovi said, "I keep telling you that the news is **FAKE NEWS!** There are **HUNDREDS** of them going in the wrong direction...!"

What's The Lesson?

1) Teshuvah means realizing, "*Maybe I'm heading the wrong way!*" All we need to do is **TURN AROUND** and start heading in the right direction.

Once we do, life starts making a lot more sense!

2) The real "*fake news*" is thinking that if you have sinned badly, it's all over. **A Yid is never over!**

Short Stories and Inspiration.

A Time to Refocus!

It was **erev Yom Kippur** when Shmuel realized that his wife would have to stay in the hospital for a medical operation. This alone was difficult, but he was also very stressed about Yom Kippur davening. **It was the holiest day of the year!** Would there be a minyan in the hospital? Feeling very stressed, he went to R' Mattisyahu Salomon ztl.

After listening to him, R' Mattisyahu looked at him and said, "**I don't understand your problem! There is only ONE thing you have to think about: What does Hashem want from you RIGHT NOW? Right now, your number one mission is to be a husband and look after your wife. Once you do that, if you can also daven a bit, then daven whatever you can!**"

What's The Lesson? Yom Kippur is a day to refocus on **who we are, how we live our life, and what life is all about.** It is a day of teshuvah, when we stop being busy. We don't even eat or drink. We **refocus** on following Hashem's Torah and ask ourselves, "**What does Hashem want from me RIGHT NOW?**" **THAT** is our job.

This Connects To Yom Kippur:

Chazal say (Taanis 26b) that there is no Yom Tov like Yom Kippur and Tu B'av.

Yom Kippur is a day of remembering that **we are on a holy mission here on this earth!** It is a day of teshuvah, where **we remind ourselves what life all about, what is REALLY important in life. Once a year, we need to STOP and not just recharge ourselves, but to RESTART! Whatever I was till now has nothing to do with my future! I can start now, fresh and with a geshmak!**

If They Wait For Me - I Will Wait For Them!

A bachur was about to leave for America and went one last time to the Kosel to daven. There, he saw the **Beis Yisroel of Gur ztl**, who walked over to him and asked the bachur, "**What is the greatest praise one can say about Hashem?**" The Beis Yisroel answered his own question, "**That He doesn't laugh at us,**" and then he walked away. **The Beis Yisroel was known for saying short, sharp statements that needed deep thought to understand.**

The bachur went to his Rosh Yeshiva, who later became **the Pnei Menachem**, and asked what the Beis Yisroel meant.

The Pnei Menachem said, "**How many times have Yidden promised to be better during Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, year after year, yet we don't always keep our word. Yet every year, when we once again tell Hashem that we want to be better, He doesn't laugh at us! He BELIEVES in us. He knows we really mean it, and He believes that THIS TIME, we will try even harder!**"

What's The Lesson? Hashem believes in us! The question is: **DO WE BELIEVE IN OURSELVES?**

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The angels say to Hashem, "**Klal Yisroel promises every year to be better, but they don't always keep their promises.**" Hashem answers the angels, "**And every year, they hope, believe, and say, 'L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim!' Next year we will already be in Yerushalayim with Mashiach. Yet another year passes, and they are still waiting.**

But they KEEP waiting, believing, and hoping!

If they still wait for Me, I WILL WAIT FOR THEM!" (Kedushas Yom Tov)

Let's remember that Hashem doesn't laugh at us and he waits for us to come back home!

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But they **KEEP** waiting, believing, and hoping!

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בס"ד

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This is not meant to rule practical *halachah*; rather it's to show the sweetness of learning.
Based on R' Yitzchak Zilberstein's seforim

Q. A Beautiful Album!

"Taste The Sweetness!"

Yossi, a beautiful baal tefillah, was getting ready for Yom Tov and wanted to prepare some beautiful tunes for the davening. So he went with his good friend Yoily and walked into a music store to find the perfect album.

As they looked through the albums, one caught Yoily's eye: "Teffilos for Shabbos Kodesh & Yomim Noraim." PERFECT! This is what you are looking for!

Yossi went to see it and said, "Wow, this is what I needed. I could listen again and again and get used to all those beautiful tunes for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur! Thank you so much, Yoily. You are always helping everyone!"

Yoily said, "This is what chessed is all about!"

After they bought it, they played the album in the car. Yossi was very happy. "This is Beautiful! The chazzan is amazing," and Yossi was already imagining himself singing all the songs.

Then Yoily stopped it. "Wait... was that an AMEN?! That's not a choir. Those are REAL PEOPLE, davening LIVE!" Yoily said. "The chazzan is saying the tefilos with Hashem's Name, and an entire crowd was answering, AMEN!"

Yossi said, "And what's the problem?"

Yoily said, "It seems it was recorded on a real Shabbos and Yom Tov. Not during the week. This might be a problem to listen to it!"

Who To Ask?

A. Of course to R' Yitzchak Zilberstein Shlita! Who makes Torah Learning so sweet & geshmak!!!

- 1) The chazzan himself didn't do any Chillul Shabbos, since he didn't know he was being recorded.
- 2) The person who put the recorder also didn't actually do any Chillul Shabbos, since he probably put on the recorder before Shabbos began, before sunset, while it was still weekday.
- 3) Still, even though technically no Chillul Shabbos was done, there is a different, very serious problem: the fact that such an album exists can itself be a terrible Chillul Hashem!

Listening to this album can make Shabbos seem less serious and may encourage others to make similar recordings, or even do worse.

Chillul Hashem is so bad that Chazal say (Yoma 86a) that even teshuvah, Yom Kippur, and even suffering don't erase this sin, and only death helps do teshuvah for this great sin.

Therefore, it's best not to buy or even listen to such an album. (See Az Nidberu.)

"Feel The Sweetness!"

"Taste The Sweetness!"

"Feel The Sweetness!"

Chillul Hashem & The Power of Learning Hashem's Torah!

Although Chazal say that only death can correct the sin of Chillul Hashem, the Chid'ah says this only applies to people who don't learn. But if someone decides to learn Torah correctly, *lishmah*, together with Teshuvah, it will atone for any sin! That's the power of Torah! Question: Why is this? Answer: perhaps because Chazal say that one must kill themselves over Torah! Sometimes it's very hard to learn, especially if one had a long and challenging day. When one strengthens themselves to learn, is ready to go all out for Torah, even if he only learns a few minutes a day, but he kills himself over it, pushes himself even when he has every excuse not to learn. Then, since he killed himself over it, it's as if he already tasted death to a certain extent, which helps even for chillul Hashem, as Chazal say! That's why it helps for any sin!

No Negative Thoughts!

There was a man on trial for a very serious thing: murder. Strong evidence pointed to him, but it wasn't enough.

His lawyer, knowing he might be found guilty, tried a trick in his closing argument and, in front of the entire court, said, "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, in one minute, the person you think is dead will walk in."

Everyone was shocked to hear that, and everyone waited and looked at the door. A minute passed, and nothing happened.

The lawyer then said, "I made that up. But you all looked with hope, so it seems all of you don't really believe that he was killed. You can't say guilty, as it seems all of you checked if he would walk in! I ask you to question that anyone was killed and find my client not guilty.

The jury looked confused but went to discuss. Soon, they came back with a guilty judgment.

The lawyer asked, "How can this be? All of you seemed to question if anyone was killed as you looked at the door!"

The jury answered, "It is true that we all looked, but we noticed that your client didn't try to look. It seems he himself knew the truth!" (R' Zechriah Wallerstein ztl)

What's the lesson? Hashem gives forgiveness to whoever asks; do we allow ourselves to be forgiven?

R' Yosef Bloch ztl said that everyone makes mistakes, as the Torah shows that even our great leaders made mistakes. It doesn't mean it's all over!

This Connects To Yom Kippur:

Chazal say (Taanis 30b) that Yom Kippur is a very happy day.

Question: How is it a happy day? Isn't it a day of teshuvah?

Answer: Teshuvah isn't a sad thing; it's a way of reminding ourselves who we are! We are good, great, and holy! We just need to remove the dust that has fallen on us, and we will shine again!

After Yom Kippur ends, we daven *mariv*, and we are already asking Hashem to forgive our sins. Yom Kippur just ended. Why do we ask forgiveness if we were just forgiven?

R' Simcha Bunam of Peshischa explained that sometimes we question Hashem's forgiveness, thinking, "There's no way I was forgiven!" For this, we right away ask for forgiveness for such a negative thought!

A Geshmaka Question & Readers Answers

This weeks geshmaka question:

Chazal say (Yoma 86b) that if one does *teshuvah* out of love of Hashem, all his sins turn into mitzvos.

Question: That is AMAZING! But why is that?

Last week's Geshmake Question:

Why do we blow so many times on Rosh Hashanah?

E.C. Answers: We blow different things, like *malchius*, *shofras*, and *zechronas*.

Teshuvah is 99% about the FUTURE!

The Chafetz Chaim ztl told public speakers that their speeches should not focus on making people feel guilty, because people already feel bad and guilty enough.

Rather, they should focus on the GOOD of the future, the blessings, and how uplifted a person will feel when he does what is right and good and keeps the holy torah!

A bachur came to R' Shlomo Friefeld ztl and said, "I feel so guilty about how much I messed up!"

R' Shlomo said with fire, "You are INNOCENT! Do you hear me? YOU'RE INNOCENT!"

R' Shlomo told a story about the Chiddushei HaRim. He told his chassidim erev Yom Kippur, "Don't keep focusing on all the sins you did. If you roll in the mud, you will get dirty!"

Reb Shlomo told his talmid, "We learn, 'Sur meira va'aseh tov,' turn away from bad and do good. This can also mean: Stop focusing on your sins. Instead, focus on the FUTURE. Focus on how much GOOD you can still do and how much you can still ACCOMPLISH!"

What's the lesson? "Teshuvah is 1 percent about the past and 99 percent about the FUTURE!" (R' Tzadok HaKohen in the name of the Kobriners)

This Connects To Yom Kippur:

The fact that Hashem made a day of Yom Kippur shows that Hashem doesn't expect us to be perfect!

We need to try our best, yes, but Hashem knew we would sometimes slip and make mistakes. This doesn't mean you are bad. (Based on R' A. J. Twersky ztl)

But getting back up is our *avodah*, our battle, no matter what, to keep going forward! Hashem gave us Yom Kippur to say, "Clean yourself up and keep going!"

Don't be Shy!

Text your answer in by Sunday to (347) 669 0369 or by email to torahissweeter@gmail.com