

Noticing

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ראה ריח בני כריח שדה... ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים (בראשית פרק כו פסוקים כז-כח)

As part of her daily routine, a mother of three opened up her daughter's lunch box in order to empty it out for the next day. Robotically, she removed the half eaten jam sandwich and empty bag of pretzels. Underneath the bags she noticed a small scrap of paper. Her mind still elsewhere, she reached towards it to throw it out. But the word Mommy caught her attention. *Mommy, thanks for making me a yummy lunch.* Touched by the simple words of her eight year old daughter, she stared at the note for a couple of minutes before finding herself upstairs next to her sleeping child. She lovingly stroked her daughter for a few moments before heading back downstairs to finish up the lunches for the next day. The result was slightly different than the usual fare. The sandwich was given an extra dollop of jam and the pretzels were joined by a single cookie decorated with sprinkles of all colours despite her "healthy snack only" policy. Underneath them both was a small scrap of paper beginning with the young girl's name.

A simple note. Being appreciated. And the "yummy lunch" became yummiest. For when a person is noticed and what they do is valued, they have a desire to provide more. This is true by human beings, and the S'forno writes that this is how *Hashem* chose to interact with the world as well.

As Yaakov approached his father, the aroma of his clothing wafted towards

Yitzchok. Yitzchok paused as he reflected on the scent. ראה ריח בני כריח שדה. And then he began his *bracha*. ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים.

But these two actions – noticing the clothing and *bentching* Yaakov – were not independent, writes the S'forno. ראה ריח בני כריח שדה – "Appreciate the scent," Yitzchok exhorted, "Besides providing our nourishment, *Hashem* enhances what we enjoy by infusing it with an appealing fragrance which is beneficial to a person." – ויתן לך האלקים מטל השמים – "And when you contemplate the goodness of the Provider and you value His kindness, He will increase His allotment, increasing your enjoyment of life."

Therefore a person is instructed to recite a *bracha* before indulging in one of these Godly gifts. He is told to stop and reflect on the fragrance infused gift that he is holding. Pause before the item is ingested and breathe in the scent which is indicative of the extra love that *Hashem* has for him. And when the feelings of appreciation for His benevolence heighten, he is to convey these emotions through the words which *Chazal* instituted.

And when a person takes that extra moment to notice the kindness imbued in the item that he is about to enjoy, and he communicates this appreciation to his Benefactor, Rabbeinu Bachya (*Devarim* 8, 10) writes, he engenders a response from the Supreme Provider which effects an extra dollop of sweetness and an explosion of colour into his own microcosmic reality together with the rest of the world.

Burial and Revival

Many Jewish people feel a certain connection to one particular *mitzva*. For this *chasid* it was the *mitzva* of burying a *meis mitzva*. To accomplish this he would fly anywhere in the world where a Jew who lived among non-Jews had left this world, and he would bury him according to Jewish tradition. But no matter where this mission took him during the mundane days of the week, when the *Shabbos* queen would visit, she would always find him in his own home celebrating her visit with his family.

One time, though, he did alter his practice. It was the result of a phone call originating in Belgium. The person calling informed him about a Jew who had just passed away. Although he had kept a *kosher* lifestyle, his children were not very knowledgeable about religion. They had asked that this *chasid* undertake the burial in a way that their father would have wanted. So the *chasid* found himself pulling out his well stamped passport and 20,000 feet above ground.

On the ground in Belgium, people had begun to gather for the funeral of this lone Jew. Many of them were indistinguishable from their non-Jewish counterparts. All of them were wondering why the funeral was not starting, until the 61 year old son of the deceased explained that they were waiting for a great rabbi from Israel.

When the taxi finally pulled up and a Jew wearing a long coat and sporting almost equally as long *peyos* stepped out, everyone tried to figure out the connection. The *chasid*, though, did not seem to notice and started the ceremony.

But he did observe an older individual whose eyes did not leave him for a moment during the entire ceremony. Curious, the *chasid* approached him afterwards. It was the son of the person who was just buried. He responded to the *chasid's* inquiries by asking if he belonged to the *Toldos Aharon* sect. When the response was affirmative, the older man began to cry. "I beg you," he said amidst his tears, "come to my house this *Shabbos*." But the *chasid* already had plans for *Shabbos*, and he was not going to leave his family to remain in Belgium.

The older man was equally as stubborn. He sat on the floor tears flowing freely and promised the *chasid* all the money in the world if he would experience a foreign setting for just one *Shabbos*. "You will be given your own

room and food, whatever you need. Just *please* stay for one *Shabbos*," He begged.

The *chasid* started to be nervous that if he did not acquiesce he may find himself back on a plane to Belgium again after *Shabbos*. So he called his house and told his family that he would have to be with them only in spirit.

After *shul*, the *chasid* scanned the crowd which was to be joining them for the *seuda* and his mood plummeted. The meal began and even the *gefille* fish did not improve his spirit. It tasted awful accompanied by discussions so foreign to him in *Yerushalayim*. But despite this, he managed to get through the meal with a warm smile plastered on his face. After *benching*, the host gave a bang on the table and turned to him beseechingly. "Could you sing the *Toldos Aharon kah ribon olam*?"

The *chasid* closed his eyes and envisioned himself in *Yerushalayim*. Slowly the feelings of *Shabbos* began to swirl around him as he began the melody which was so familiar. "*Ant hu malka*," he sang, and amazingly, his host began to hum along as tears mapped out wet paths down the sides of his face. The other people silently watched the strange duet. And then the song finished – and started again and again until midnight. Eventually, the host joined in and sang the words amidst his tears.

When the emotional singing ended the host gave a much owed explanation. "My father was a businessman who would often travel to Jerusalem. Whenever he would go, I would come with him. Every Friday night after our meal, we would learn *Gemara* and then, when it was time, we would join the *tish* with the *Admor* who would sing this song. I would be very affected by this song and each time I heard it I left strengthened. But I could not keep that feeling when I returned to live among the non-Jews and I would fall. So that is how I was. I would grow from the song and then fall once again. But it has been too many years since I had last heard the song and I had forgotten it. As you can see I am not as religious as I could be. And I felt that and I waited and hoped that I would one day be able to hear the melody again and be touched by its power. Therefore, when I saw you dressed in a similar manner to those at the *tish*, I begged you to stay so I could once again allow the tune to permeate my soul, strengthen myself and bring merit to my father."

How Can H.I.T. Help You?

Do you own a property management business that employs a superintendent who responds to calls on *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*? Such an arrangement can involve *chillul Shabbos*.

To book a consultation or to find out more information please call (416) 535-8008 or email info@halachainstitute.com



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Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

I offer IT services and bill the client per hour. I send an invoice after the issue is resolved. The lawyer who I am working with suggested that I add a late payment penalty clause which will encourage a client to pay in a timely manner. I am concerned that this is a problem of *ribbis*. What is the *halacha*?

The Shulchan Aruch (*Yoreh Deah* 177, 14) discusses the allowance of late penalties. Practically, a penalty clause would be permitted in your situation as long as the following conditions were met.

- It is a one-time fine which does not grow over time. If there is a requirement to continue to pay additional fees every month then it is not permitted.
- The time for payment is not extended when the penalty is paid.
- Money is owing due to a service and not due to an outstanding loan.

The *Sefer Mishnas Ribbis* (20, 8, 10) brings *poskim* who maintain that if the penalty clause was not written in a way that would preclude an *asmachta* – a lack of full consent, it would not be *halachically* binding and any penalty payment would be *ribbis*. The reason for this is that since there is no obligation to pay the penalty, this

is not a penalty payment but a gift to the lender. However, if a penalty clause is standard practice for this service, then the clause would be binding as the Chasam Sofer (*Choshen Mishpat*, 66) writes as this is a valid *kinyan situmpta* – a *kinyan* based on the practice of merchants. (See also Aruch Hashulchan 201, 3) We will discuss next week how to write a penalty clause that will preclude an *asmachta* next week.

After I came home from *toiveling* my pot, I noticed that I forgot to remove a sticker. Do I need to go back to the *mikva* to *retoivel* the pot?

If the sticker is meant to come off and you would rather that it not be there (*makpid*), then you would need to immerse the pot a second time. If it is the type of sticker (such as a clear sticker which advertises the brand of the pot) that is both small (*miut*) and meant to stay on the pot and its presence does not bother you (*ayno makpid*), then you would not need to *toivel* it again.

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This week's Parsha we are introduced to the twins, Yaakov and Esav. Here are interesting facts about twins.

- Cryptophasia is a language created by young twins that only they understand. Often it includes mannerisms and physical motions as well. To outsiders, it sounds like gibberish.
- Researchers at the University of Padova in Italy found that twins begin bonding with each other in the mother's womb as early as 14 weeks old!
- 22% of twins are left handed compared with only 10% of singletons.
- Despite sharing the same DNA code, identical twins have different fingerprints. "Friction ridges", the faint lines you see on your fingers, are formed from pressure on the fingers from the baby touching and their surroundings. These vary depending on the fetus's position, as well the density of the amniotic fluid spiraling around their fingers at different times. This is different by each twin.

RIDDLE



Although it is generally good to do more, there are certain *mitzvos* that if a person does too much he has not fulfilled his obligation. Can you name one such *mitzva*?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: How is it possible for a person to be called up for three consecutive *aliyos*?

ANSWER: A *Kohen* who received *maftir* by *shachris* was later called up for *kohen* by *mincha*. At that *minyan* there was no *Levi* present. As such the *Kohen* received the second *aliya* as well; his third consecutive one.

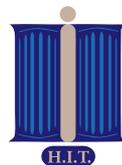
Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

WINNER OF LAST WEEK'S PRIZE: Zev Basser

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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