



The Midwives Challenge

By Yehuda Frankel, 11th Grade

And because the midwives feared Hashem, He made houses for them. *ויהי כי יראו המילדות את האלקים ויעש להם בתים. שמות א:כא*
 Miriam and Yocheved, who were also known as Shifrah and Poha, were told by Paroah to kill all the Jewish boys that they delivered. They refused to do what was commanded of them and according to Rashi, their reward was that their children became kings and princes.

Why did they get such a great reward for not killing Jewish babies? Usually such a great reward is given to those who overcome a major struggle. What struggle did they overcome? Was it such a great test for them to not kill the Jewish babies?

Also, if one is given a choice between killing another Jew or being killed, he or she is obligated to accept death for him or herself. If that is the case, then why did they get such a great reward for doing something they were already commanded to do?

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky explains that all of the Egyptian names in the Torah are derived from the name Paroah. Therefore, he says, if we look at the roots of the names Shifrah and Poha, they are derived from the word Paroah and therefore must have been Egyptian names. However, there is a midrash that explains that the Jews were praised for not using Egyptian names in Egypt. So

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It's the Effort That Counts

By Doni Sturm, 10th Grade

The Pasuk says that Basyah, the daughter of Paroah, stretched out her arm to grab the basket that contained Moshe. Rashi quotes the Midrash that says that a Neis happened and Basyah's arm stretched out very long so that she could reach the basket. However, a question still remains: if the basket was really far away for Basyah, why did she even bother to stretch out her arm?

A number of communal activists were at a meeting which was conducted by Rav Meir Shapiro, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. The issue at hand at the meeting involved saving people's lives. There were some people at the meeting who said, "what needs to be done is impossible, there is no way we can possibly be successful". Rav Meir Shapiro then got up and cited this Rashi about the miracle of Basyah's outstretched arm. He then posed the question we asked before, as to why did Basyah tried to stretch out her arm if it was impossible to reach the basket? He said over an answer in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe, that when it comes to saving another life, a person must try to do anything that he can do to save that person. Even if he thinks that there is no way in the world that his efforts can possibly succeed, he must still make a sincere effort to try anyway. In reality, a person can accomplish much more than he ever imagined. "This applies to us as well," said Rav Shapiro, "we must do everything

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Torah Teasers*By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe***Parshas Shemos****Questions**

1. In Egypt the Jews are forced to produce bricks (Exodus 1:14). In what context are bricks first mentioned in the Torah?
2. Aside from this parsha, where do midwives assist in a birth? (2 answers)
3. In what context does the number three appear in this parsha? (2 answers)
4. In this parsha, who is called a Levite?
5. In this parsha, who is called a kohen (priest)?
6. In this parsha, where do five verses in a row begin with the same word?
7. In what context is snow mentioned?
8. Straw was used by the Jews in Egypt to make bricks (Exodus 5:12). Where else in the book of Exodus is straw mentioned?

Answers

1. Bricks are first mentioned in parshas Noah where the people produced bricks to build the Tower of Bavel (Genesis 11:3).
2. In parshas Vayishlach a midwife is involved in the birth of Binyamin to Rachel (Genesis 35:17). In parshas Vayeshev, a midwife assists in the birth of Peretz and Zerach to Tamar, the wife of Yehuda (Genesis (28:38).
3. Moshe's mother hid him for three months before placing him in the Nile (Exodus 2:2). At the end of the parsha, Moshe requests from Pharaoh to allow the nation to travel on a three-day journey to serve Hashem (Exodus 5:3).
4. Aharon is called a Levite (Exodus 4:14).
5. Yisro is called a kohen (priest) (Exodus 2:16).
6. Verses 3:11-15 all begin with the word "Vayomer" - "And he said."
7. When Hashem inflicts Moshe with leprosy on his hand, the Torah states that Moshe's hand is "as white as snow" (Exodus 4:6).
8. In parshas Beshalach, the drowning of the Egyptians is compared to straw sinking in water (Exodus 15:7).



1st aliyah- All of the 12 sons died, yet Yaakov's descendents in Mitzrayim were "fruitful and swarmed and increased and became very very strong." A new pharaoh arose and proposed to afflict the jews and make them slaves, which then prevented them from having children pharaoh thought. He instructed them to create and build storage cities for pharaoh. But as much work they did, they still multiplied. Pharaoh then summoned the jewish maidservants and instructed them that to kill all the jewish baby boys. The tzidkaniyos they were feared Hashem and went against pharaohs word.

2nd aliyah- He calls the midwives in again and was angry they did not follow his orders. They answered that the Jewish women were so skilled that they delivered the babies before the midwives arrived. Hashem rewarded them for the bravery, but pharaoh instructed all the egyptians to throw all the new born males in the Nile. Our leader, Moshe was born. His mother, who wanted her son to stay alive put him in a basket and set him floating down the Nile. Bas Pharaoh came to bathe in the river and saw Moshe in the basket and took him as a child. Moshe's sister Miriam, who saw the whole thing happen, offered to get a jewish maidservant for the baby. When Bas Pharaoh agreed, she went and got his mother. Moshe's mother nursed him and after he was weaned, brought him back to Bas Pharaoh.

3rd aliyah- Moshe was raised in Pharaoh's palace and when he matured, he went out one day and saw an Egyptian hitting a Jew. Moshe killed him and word of his action reached pharaoh. Moshe had to run away and ran to Midian, where he married a girl named Tzipporah, the daughter of Yisro. They gave birth to a son Gershom. Back in mitzrayim, the slavery of the jews got worse. They cried to Hashem and He remembered the bris He made with the avos.

4th aliyah- Moshe was shepherding Yisro's flock in the wilderness where he arrived at the "mountain of Hashem". There he

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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Chezky Rothman

Travelling Before Davening

What is the Issue?

Gemara Brachos 14a: A person is not allowed to take care of his own needs before davening. Furthermore, if a person davens before travelling, Hashem will take care of them on their journey.

- A. Sounds like it is a nice thing to daven before you travel, but not necessarily Asur to not daven beforehand.
- B. Beis Yosef Siman 89: That is an inaccurate reading. The Gemara is saying that it is Asur to travel without davening first.

To What Degree is it Asur?

1. Mishna Berura Seif Kattan 20 in Siman 89: It is a continuation of the previous halacha mentioned in the Gemara, namely, not doing your own needs before davening. This is just an example of a personal need, but there is nothing special about travelling.
2. Klausenberger Rebbe Teshuvos Divrei Yatziv Orach Chaim Siman 58: Travelling before davening is a worse than doing anything else before davening.
 - His reasoning is based on Gemara Eruvin 64: When a person travels he is unable to focus. Therefore, travelling will not only be disrespectful to Hashem, it will also ruin your concentration on davening.

There are those who bring down leniencies:

- A. Rama Siman 89 Seif 3: As long as you say Birchas Hashachar before leaving, that is acceptable.
 - i. However, it is good to be strict, and not follow this opinion.

Why Wouldn't It Be Good to Follow this Opinion and When Would You be Able to?

1. The Gemara (Brachos) said that you should be say Tefillah and then travel. This refers to Shemonei Esrei, and it would therefore seem difficult to follow the Rama.
2. Aruch Hashulchan: The Rama is difficult because it is quoting from the Sefer Terumas Hadeshen. The format of the Terumas Hadeshen is Q&A. The Rama is only quoting the question which says that "what are people relying on when they have the practice to travel after inly saying Birchas Hashachar?" He answers by saying that they are wrong and that Tefilla

only refers to Shemonei Esrei.

Therefore, the Rama is quoting the Terumas Hadeshen out of context, which no one actually held like.

- Furthermore, the language of the Rama is strange because why did he say "it is good to be strict," he should have said you cannot be lenient!

However, the Aruch Hashulchan points out that if you are travelling to do a Mitzvah, then it would be permissible to travel.

- a) Ex: Going to give Tzedaka, shopping for Shabbos or Yom Tov.

3. Rav Vosner Shevet Halevi Chelek 8 Siman 19: Since the Rama only said it is good to be strict, you can rely on it whenever you have a reason to.

- a) Ex: If you want to travel before davening for a job in Newark (which normally takes 2 hours in rush hour traffic), you would be able to say Birchas Hashachar, travel, and then Daven.

4. Klausenberger Rebbe (quoted above): You can do chores that are for Mitzvah before davening, but travelling before davening, even for a Mitzvah is not allowed.

- You cannot even travel before Davening for a Bris!

5. Ishei Yisorel quotes Rav Ben Zion Abba Shaul and Rav Chaim Kanievsky: Traveling to the Kotel is considered a Dvar Mitzvah, and is allowed.

How long is considered a travelling?

1. Rav Ben Zion Abba Shaul: Anything less than 1.5 hours is not considered travelling.
2. Most (Ashkenazi) Poskim: It means anything beyond the normal distance that you go to daven.

How early in the morning Does This Halcha Apply?

1. From Alos Hashachar
 - a) Ishei Yisorel: Even within 30 minutes of Alos would be forbidden.
2. Mishna Berurah Seif Kattan 19, quoting the Kesef Mishna 6th perek of Hilchos Tefillah: This also applies to travelling before Mincha and Maariv.

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Small Acts of Kindness

Ari Katznelson 10th Grade

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Shemos, Pharaoh tells Shifrah and Puah to kill all newborn baby boys. Rashi explains that instead of fulfilling Pharaoh's command, Shifra adorned and cleaned the child after birth and Puah would whisper noises to the child in order to comfort and quiet the baby. The question is, why do the Torah and, by extension, Rashi explain the names and actions of the midwives? Why are they important? Rabbi Yehuda Katz answers that the actions of the midwives are documented to show that Hashem records and acknowledges every mitzvah. Even though the acts of kindness of the midwives may seem like small ones, the Torah wants to show that every act of kindness, no matter how big or small it is, is important.

(Yehuda Frankel- Continued from page 1)

how did they end up with Egyptian names? Rav Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro says that just like when Paroah changed Yosef's name to Tzafnas Paneach to make him Egyptian and not retain his Jewish name, Paroah changed Miriam and Yocheved's names as well.

Why did Paroah feel that he needed to change their names? Rav Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro explains that Paroah knew that a Jewish woman could never kill a Jewish baby. Therefore, he changed their names, he hoped to change their nature as well. He wanted them to be ruthless like the Egyptians, which would enable them to kill these babies.

According to this approach, we can now explain the great reward that Miriam and Yocheved got. Once their names were changed, their nature was also changed, and by not killing the Jewish babies they were going against their nature. By overcoming their nature, they overcame a great struggle and therefore merited a great reward, to have their children become kings and princes.

(Doni Sturm- Continued from page 1)

we can even if we don't really believe we will be successful because Hashem may help us succeed as long as we try." Just like Basyah attempted to save Moshe even though it was physically impossible and Hashem miraculously stretched out her arm, so too in our own lives, we should always try to help out someone else. We may be surprised by the results.

The Chofetz Chaim says that any kindness that we do for someone else is eventually paid back to us, as we see later on in the Parsha, when Moshe saved Tzipora, who at that time was a complete stranger, from the hands of the shepherds. Later on, Tzipora saved Moshe's life later on when the Malach was about to kill him because he didn't give a Bris Milah to his son, which was measure for measure. We see from this incident that whenever we do a favor for someone else we really benefit ourselves. Of course, the highest level is to do Chesed for someone else without thinking about our own personal gain. However, when we feel reservations about helping someone else we should at least take into consideration that we are really helping ourselves by doing kindness for others. Even if we aren't paid back right away, in the course of time we will eventually see the fruits of our kindness.

The Steipler says over that when he was a young student in Europe he wrote a letter to the author of the Imrei Moshe, and asked if he can buy his book at a cheaper price, since he lacked money. The author sent him a copy of the book for free. Years later in Eretz Yisroel, after WWII, the students of the Imrei Moshe wanted to reprint his book, but there were no copies of the book remaining- the only one left was the one that the Steipler had received a few years earlier. From this last copy they were able to reprint the Sefer. This is a perfect example of how a small kindness can end up helping one in the future, even beyond one's expectations!

Menachem Gewirtz
10th Grade

THE FIRE OF LIFE

In this week's Parsha, Parshas Shemos, we see an exponential growth in the Jewish population in Egypt. The Egyptians took notice of this and were afraid that if a war broke out the Jews would join their enemies and force them out of their own land. The Medrash writes that Pharaoh summoned his three chief advisors: Bilam, Iyov, and Yisro, to ask their advice on how to deal with this situation. Bilam advised Pharaoh to kill the Jews, so God punished him, and he himself was later killed. Iyov kept quiet and was punished with a life of suffering. Yisro ran away and did not advise Pharaoh to do anything and was later rewarded with his descendants becoming the heads of the Sanhedrin. It is clear that Bilam deserved a far greater punishment than Iyov and Billam since Iyov didn't commit an active crime, as he merely remained silent and let Billam suggest to kill the Jews. However, even though it seems that Billam's sin was greater than Iyov's it appears that Iyov's punishment was greater than that of Bilam. While Bilam suffered a quick death, Iyov had to endure pain and suffering during his life. Why would the greater sinner get off easier than the one who sinned less?

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that to be alive is, in itself, the greatest gift possible. Life is full of opportunities despite the presence of any pain or suffering. No matter how bad life can get it is still infinitely greater than death. Consequently, Bilam's punishment was far more severe than Iyov's. While Iyov still had the gift of life, Bilam lost it forever.

Late one night, R' Yisrael Salanter noticed a shoemaker at work fixing shoes. He asked him, "Why are you working so late?" The man replied, "As long as the candle is still burning, I can still fix the shoes." This can be used as a mashal for what our perspective on life should really be. As long as we are still in this world we can grow and accomplish more, but once the candle goes out, our time is up, and we can't grow or accomplish anything anymore. So we must take advantage of the candle's burning flame and make the most of our time in this world.

(Aliyot Summary- Continued from page 2)

saw a bush burning, yet it was not being consumed. When he approached the bush, Hashem called out and declared that He has seen the affliction of Klal Yisrael and decided to take them out.

5th aliyah- The aliyah starts off with Hashem giving moshe specific instructions: Gather the elders and inform them that Hashem had remembered them and is now rescuing them and bringing them to the land of milk and honey. Then, approach Pharaoh and request permission to leave along with the jews. Hashem informed Moshe that pharaoh would not agree to these terms but the geulah will nonetheless come after He hits Egypt with His strong hand. At that point, the jews would leave with riches and spoils. Hashem gave Moshe 3 miracles to perform before the jews to prove that he was sent by Hashem. When Moshe protested to Hashem and said that he is not suited for the job because of his speech impediment, Hashem assigned his brother Aaron to be the spokesperson.

6th aliyah- Moshe took his wife and two sons and headed for mitzrayim. Hashem told Moshe to warn Pharaoh: "So said G-d, 'My firstborn son is Israel. So I say to you, send out My son so that he will worship Me. And if you refuse to send him out, behold, I will slay your firstborn son.'" On the way, Moshes' wife performed a bris on their son. Afterwards, Moshe met Aaron, who had come from mitzrayim to greet him, and together they went to mitzrayim, gathered the elders and performed the signs that Hashem had given Moshe.

7th aliyah- the parsha ends off with Moshe and Aaron going to Pharaoh and presenting Hashems demand. Pharaoh mocked the request and instructed the Egyptian taskmasters to increase the jews slaves workload. The jews were unable to meet Pharaoh's new demands, and were beaten as a result. Moshe addressed Hashem: "Why have You mistreated this people? Why have You sent me? Since I have come to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has mistreated this people, and You have not saved Your people." Hashem responded: "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a mighty hand he will send them out..."

Dylan Broder
10th Grade

Good From Birth

When the pasuk is discussing Moshe's birth, Yocheved saw that "he was good". Rashi explains this to mean that the house glowed when Moshe was born. Rashi understands because of the usage of the word *Tov* which is the same word that Hashem used to describe the light that He created at creation. The Or HaChaim says the word *Tov* shows that Moshe was born already having Bris Mila. Similarly, a Gemara in Sotah quotes R' Nechemia who says it means she saw Moshe was fitting for prophecy. These explanations seem difficult because they seem to imply that Moshe was perfect from the moment he was born. Judaism is all about striving to become great and working hard to get there. What do we make out of this? The Tiferes Yisroel in his sefer says that Moshe actually had great struggle and his instincts and nature were to have bad middos! This is the true meaning of "good". Although Moshe had all odds against him, both with the situation in Egypt and with combatting his evil instincts, he overcame them and became the leader of the Jewish people.

(10 Minute Halacha- Continued from page 3)

- Ex: If you are in Yeshiva University, and would want to come home at night, you would first have to daven there before you could leave.
- 3. Shulchan Aruch Harav Seif 4 Siman 89: Only applies to Shachris
- 4. Rav Wosner Shevet Halevi Chelk 8 Siman 18: There are 2 problems with travelling before davening:
 1. Taking care of your own needs before taking care of your relationship with Hashem.
 - ◆ If so, only an issue by Shachris
 2. Very often when you Daven at a new Shul you will have less Kavana compared to your normal Shul.
 - ◆ If so, this would apply to all Tefilos.

(SOG- Continued from page 8)

travel to Moscow, from whence the Vitebsk suppliers purchased their wares, and to sell his stock to merchants in Vitebsk and Liozna.

A year passed, and fortune continued to smile down upon him. The Alter Rebbe told him to travel to Konigsberg, which would allow him to sell even to the Moscow businessmen.

And so it was. The onetime poor teacher and pastry seller became a well-respected businessman with extensive dealings all across Russia.

Once, before departing on a business trip, the entrepreneur "This is not what I had in mind," said the Alter Rebbe came to seek the blessing and advice of the Alter Rebbe. "You're traveling to Konigsberg," noted the Rebbe. "Perhaps you can bring back a gift for me."

Honored that the Rebbe deigned to ask him for a gift, the man went to the finest shop in Konigsberg and purchased an expensive golden snuff box.

"This is a fine gift," said the Alter Rebbe when the man returned, "but this is not what I had in mind."

On his next trip, the man purchased an even more expensive snuff box, but again the Rebbe said that it was not what he wanted.

Before the man's next trip, the Rebbe told him. "You're traveling to Konigsberg. Do you perhaps go to the theater there?"

A sincere chassid and pious Jew, the businessman had never been to the theater in his life, but on this trip he dutifully purchased a ticket to a show in the Konigsberg theater. He settled into the plush seat in the private box high above the stage and promptly fell asleep.

Tired from his business dealings, the man slept soundly and was only jolted awake when the janitor entered his booth to clean it.

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No Coincidence

Hillel Golubtchik 10th Grade

In this week's parsha we see that Moshe was a shepherd. We see in other places in Tanach that there were many prophets (and leaders) of the Jewish People who were shepherds. Avraham seemed to dabble in shepherding, Yitzchak was a shepherd, and Yaakov chose this line of work too. Furthermore, later on in history, Dovid Hamelech was a shepherd also, amongst others. The reason that this is relevant to this parsha is that immediately before Moshe receives his prophecy by the Sneh, the pasuk (3:1) reports that "Moshe was shepherding" almost as if to say that his occupation as a shepherd was conducive to, or in some way caused, his prophecy.

How is it that Moshe being a shepherd caused Hashem to reach out to him? The Kli Yakar similarly asks if this is if it is coincidental that all of the leading figures of our history were shepherds. As with most (if not all) things in Torah, the answer is no - it's no coincidence. As the Kli Yakar says, a shepherd simply has more time in the great outdoors to contemplate the wonders of Hashem's creation. Moreover, a shepherd has time alone to think things over and through this reach a certain level of spiritual purity. Being outdoors gives a great opportunity to recognize the greatness of Hashem.

The Mesillas Yesharim says this can be a reason why Pharaoh tried to busy the Jews as much as possible with slavery, so that they would not have time to think about life.

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"Where did you come from?" asked the janitor, who was not accustomed to seeing sleeping chassidim in the expensive theater seats (or any theater seats for that matter).

"From White Russia," came the reply.

"From which city?"

"From Liozna."

"Do you perhaps know Zalminya?" said the cleaner, using a familiar appellation for the Alter Rebbe, whose full name was Schneur Zalman.

"Indeed, I do. In fact, I am a student of his."

"If so, please give him my regards."

"But what is your name?"

"Call me Karl."

Sure enough, upon his return to Liozna, the chassid dutifully gave the Alter Rebbe regards from Karl, the theater cleaner.

"Yes," exclaimed the Rebbe. "That was the gift I had been hoping for."

Before the man's next trip to Konigsberg, the Alter Rebbe gave him a small package to bring to Karl. "When you get to Konigsberg," said the Alter Rebbe, "please give this to him. And then, when you are ready to go home, please take it from him and bring it back to me."

Upon his arrival, the businessman quickly found Karl at the theater and gave him the package. When it was time to go, he again sought out the theater cleaner to retrieve the package.

"Did Zalminya say that I need to give it back?" asked Karl, The Alter Rebbe gave him a small package to bring to Karl opening the package. He lovingly withdrew a sheaf of papers with the Alter Rebbe's handwriting. They would soon be printed and gain fame as the Tanya, the Alter Rebbe's foundational work of Chassidic thought.

"Divine inspiration," he repeated to himself as he leafed through the pages. "True divine inspiration . . . I don't know what will be left for Moshiach himself to teach."

With that, he closed the package and returned it to the businessman.

When telling this story, the famed Rabbi Shmuel Gronim Estherman would conclude: It seems that Karl was among the 36 hidden tzadikim (righteous men), and the Alter Rebbe wanted his approval for the Tanya.



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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: DOVID BLANK

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There was once a poor but righteous man who lived on the road leading to Liozna. Every day, he would walk to Liozna, where he would teach Torah to some neighborhood children in exchange for a few pennies from their impoverished parents.

His wife further supplemented their income by baking. Suddenly, they were awakened by a knock on the door pastries, which her husband would distribute to customers in town every day.

One winter's night, the family lay sleeping. Suddenly, they were awakened by a knock on the door. Clutching a candle, the teacher hastened to open the door. There he found a man half frozen and covered in snow.

The wayfarer was quickly brought inside and given a steaming cup of tea to drink. After the stranger had warmed himself, the teacher took his sleeping children from their paillasse on the stove (which was the warmest place in the house) and bade the traveler to lie down and stretch his weary bones there.

Early the next morning, the stranger departed. The children, still groggy with sleep and stiff with cold, crept back onto the stove to finish their sleep.

Suddenly, a call rang out. "There's something hard and lumpy in the bed!"

Upon further inspection, the teacher and his wife realized that the stranger had left a pouch with a significant sum of gold coins.

They waited a few days for the guest to claim his property, but he never returned.

Unsure of how to proceed, the man turned to

the Alter Rebbe, who lived in Liozna at the time.

After hearing the man's story, the Rebbe replied, "G-d has sent you this treasure. No one will come to claim it, and it is rightfully yours. However, it is not wise for you to begin to spend lavishly, since people will suspect all kinds of things. Rather, keep your change of fortune a secret for now. Finish teaching your pupils this semester. When the session ends, come to me, and I'll tell you what to do next."

When the semester ended, the teacher came to the Alter Rebbe, who then advised him: "Rent yourself a house in town with a store. Use your coins to purchase some supplies from the local wholesaler and begin to sell them at a profit. After this succeeds, come back to me in a year, and I'll advise you further."

One year later, the erstwhile teacher reported: "Thank G-d, business has prospered and we have been living quite well. In fact, we drew just a few coins from the treasure that we found in the stove."

The Alter Rebbe then advised him to extend his business dealings, purchasing directly from the supplier in Vitebsk instead of the local wholesaler.

Another year passed, and the man reported that business had flourished even more and that he still had the vast majority of his coins to invest.

This time, the Alter Rebbe advised him to

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