

The Family Dynamic

By Moishy Rothman, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

When the sun is about to set, it's crucial to light a flame to light the darkened path. When the exile was beginning, Yosef informed his brothers and family that his bones were to be brought from Egypt and carried back to Eretz Yisroel when the Geulah occurred. He required an oath to be taken to guarantee this undertaking. Rabbi Soloveitchik wonders why Yosef had to make everyone swear that they'd accomplish the job? Yosef had his own children! Why couldn't Yosef's own descendants accomplish this responsibility?

To understand the answer, Rabbi Soloveitchik gives background to this episode. Yaakov has just died. The brothers are now alone. They don't have a father to protect them from the imagined wrath of Yosef. They wonder, "maybe Yosef was only pretending to like us, just to keep our father alive. Now, who knows if Yosef will continue to feed us, or maybe he'll flash back to the events of the past (namely the sale), stirring anger." The Chumash describes the plea of the brothers to Yosef. They ask him for compassion, saying that Yaakov wanted the family to be together. Yosef accepts the request. However, Yosef still feels a sense of fear and estrangement within the family dynamic. This type of relationship is not healthy, especially for a fledgling nation experiencing a long and painstaking exile. To mend this schism, Yosef, says Rabbi Soloveitchik, asked *the brothers* to bury his bones in Isra-

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Seeing the Good in the Bad

By Daniel Aharon, Editor of Rabbinic Articles, 11th Grade

In one of the most famous perakim of Tehillim (23:1), Dovid HaMelech compares Hashem to a shepherd. He writes, "Hashem Ro'i Lo Echsar" - "Hashem is my shepherd, and I shall not lack." The Yalkut Shimoni comments on this and writes that herding sheep is one of the lowliest professions. A shepherd is hard at work outside with his staff, carrying heavy loads. He has to constantly make sure that all of the sheep are among the herd, and he must run and bring back any who might have tried to flee. Herding sheep is an arduous and menial task that seems undesirable. If this is so, why does Dovid compare Hashem to a shepherd? Wouldn't it be more fitting to use a term more honorable?

The Midrash explains that Dovid was not the first one to refer to Hashem as a shepherd. In this week's parsha, Parshas Vayechi, Yaakov Avinu uses a similar phrase while blessing Yosef's sons, Ephraim and Menashe. He says, "Ha'Roeh Osi," meaning "the One who shepherds me," referring to Hashem (Bereshis 48:15). Before Yaakov, this comparison of Hashem to a shepherd was not used - the metaphor is a chidush. If so, why does Yaakov, during one of the final opportunities to speak to his children, decide to introduce this novel idea that Hashem is like a shepherd, one of the lowliest professions? Yaakov himself depicted the difficulty of being a shepherd in Parshas Vayetzei, when he said,

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Vayechi Questions

1. Yaakov lived in Egypt for 17 years. Where else in the book of Genesis is 17 years referred to?
2. What similar ailment occurs to both Yitzhak and to Yaakov?
3. Where is a bed mentioned in this parsha? (4 answers)
4. Which two pairs of brothers are mentioned in the same verse?
5. Where in this parsha does one person place his hand upon the head of another? Where else in the Torah does it say explicitly that one person places his hand on another? (2 answers)

Answers

1. Parshas Vayeshev begins when Yosef is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2).
2. Both Yitzhak and Yaakov had trouble with their eyesight during old age (Genesis 27:1, 48:10).
3. At the beginning of the parsha, Yaakov's bed is mentioned three times: Yaakov bows by the head of the bed (Genesis 47:31); Yaakov strengthens himself to sit up on the bed (Genesis 48:2); in that same verse, Yaakov gathers his legs to the bed before dying. The fourth time a bed is mentioned is in the blessing given to Reuven, in reference to his moving of Yaakov's bed after the death of Rachel (Genesis 49:4).
4. Ephraim and Menashe, and Reuven and Shimon, are all mentioned in the same verse (Genesis 48:1).
5. Yaakov places his hands on the heads of Ephraim and Menashe when giving them a blessing (Genesis 48:14). In Leviticus 24:14, witnesses who heard someone curse Hashem place their hand on his head before executing him. In Numbers 27:23, Moshe rests his hands on Yehoshua to transfer the leadership.

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el. Such a request surely shocked the skeptical brothers. Yosef was serious when he forgave the brothers. Afterwards, all doubts of animosity were removed, and the Jewish nation stayed united throughout the exile.

On Friday, we fasted, commemorating the siege of Yerushalayim and the beginning of the end, culminating in the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash. 490 years later, the second temple was destroyed. The Gemara in Yoma 9b, comparing the sins of the first and second temple, concludes that the sin of the second temple, senseless hatred and friction, was worse than the sins of the first temple, murder, adultery, and idolatry. It's our responsibility to correct the wrongs of the past, ending nonsensical arguments and ruptures between our fellow Jews. We should learn from the story of Yosef, who led the Jewish people into exile, that in order to survive and be redeemed, a strong "family" dynamic, which is really a national objective, should be established, creating a united nation able to survive and ultimately be redeemed.

(Daniel Aharon — Continued from page 1)

"By day scorching heat consumed me, and frost by night" (Bereshis 31:40). What is the meaning of all of this?

Rav Yissochar Frand quotes a beautiful idea from Rav Matisyahu Solomon. In last week's parsha, during Yaakov's meeting with Pharaoh, Yaakov told Pharaoh, "Few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the lifespans of my forefathers" (Bereshis 47:8-9). The Da'as Zekeinim M'Baalei HaTosfos explain that it was improper for Yaakov to speak in this way. Hashem saved Yaakov from Lavan and Eisav, and returned Yosef and Dina to him. Years were even deducted from his life as punishment for these words.

Rav Solomon explains that on his deathbed, Yaakov is making a cheshbon ha'nefesh, a review of his actions. He remembers the complaint that he made to Pharaoh and acknowledges that he did the wrong thing. Yaakov realizes that everything that seemed bitter in his life was really for his own good. This is when Yaakov makes the comparison of Hashem to a shepherd. A sheep doesn't always understand the shepherd's motives. When a sheep flees from the flock, the shepherd, seeing a wolf lurking, chases it back. Sometimes a sheep will want to continue grazing in a certain spot, but the shepherd, realizing it would be dangerous to stay, moves the sheep along. Other times, the shepherd must hit the sheep with a staff to keep it on course. Yaakov now comprehends that like a shepherd, Hashem always had Yaakov's benefit in mind, even if he didn't see it right away.

It is very fitting that the word Yaakov uses to mean shepherd is not written in its full form (reish-vov-ayin-hay). Instead, it's spelled without the vov and has the same letters as ra'ah, which means 'bad'. There is a strong connection between these words - the lesson that Yaakov learned. What we perceive as ra'ah (bad) is really what the ro'eh (Hashem), in His eternal wisdom, knows is ultimately good for us.

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10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Uri Himelstein

Eating on Erev Shabbos

This week, we will conclude our discussion of the Halachos of Erev Shabbos with the Halachos of eating on Erev Shabbos. These Halachos become all the more (or less) relevant on Fridays like this week, when we are fasting for Asara Beteves. Have a easy and meaningful fast and a good Shabbos!

- Uri

I. Introduction

- a. There is a Gemara in Gittin 38a that says that there were two families in Yerushalayim, one made a seudah on Shabbos and one made one on Erev Shabbos. They were both uprooted. Now the obvious question is, what is wrong with making a seudah on Shabbos? We are supposed to! Rashi interjects by explaining that they made it during the time of the drasha to avoid learning, so they were ne'ekar. In terms of the family who made the seudah on Erev Shabbos, Rashi has three opinions as to what they did wrong: either they made it on Friday night and they also made it during the drasha; they made the Friday night seudah better than the day seudah, against the Gemara in the tenth perek of Pesachim, which says that if one has the option of making the better meal at night or day he should choose to do it by day; or they made it on Erev Shabbos proper, and they were punished because then they will be satisfied on Erev Shabbos and they won't be properly hungry that night for the seudah. However, this is problematic, as it goes against the Gemara at the beginning of the tenth perek of Pesachim (99b) that states that on Erev Shabbos (in contrast to Erev Pesach), one may be "ochel veholeich ad shetechshach," which is interpreted by most Rishonim as meaning that one may start a meal as late as they want. So there is a setirah: on the

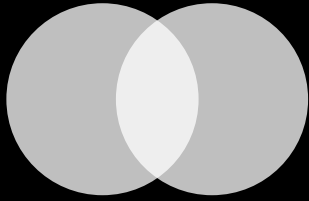
one hand, the Gemara in Gittin (according to Rashi) seems to be saying that it isn't good to eat on Erev Shabbos, while the Gemara in Pesachim has no issue with it. The way that one goes about answering this setirah will pave the way for how one paskens in this issue.

- b. The Ramban in Gittin gives two approaches to solve the setirah. He suggests that the Gemara in Peshachim that allows it is only for a one time practice, but for one to do this every week like the family did in Gittin would be inappropriate. He also suggests that the issue isn't the achilah, it is the lack of hachana for Shabbos which occurs as a result of having a meal, like when the Gemara discusses how various amora'im used to stop whatever they were doing to prepare for Shabbos (Rebbe also told over from Rav Pam's grandson that every Erev Shabbos he would stop what he was doing and make a potato kugel for Shabbos), so therefore the eating as suggested by the Gemara in Pesachim is fine. The only issue with the family in Gittin is the fact that they were having a full meal. Similarly, the Beis Yosef suggests that the issue is in the kevius of a seudah which would be forbidden, and that eating by itself would be okay; he does not say that the issue is the lack of hachana.

II. Does it make a difference when the meal is taking place?

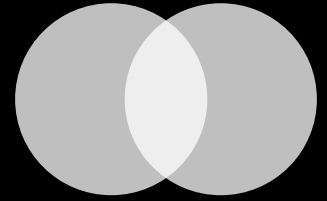
- a. Assuming like the Beis Yosef's way of answering the setirah, which is the way we pasken (as it is recorded in the Shulchan Aruch [which is of course written by the Beis Yosef]). We would have to determine when the issur to have a meal with kevius is in place. Interestingly, the Rambam, when he formulates this rule, says what

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Loving a Fellow Jew

By Brian Chernigoff, 10th Grade



In this week's parsha, Yaakov blesses each of his sons before he passes away. He blesses Yehuda that since he admitted his sin by the story of Tamar, he'll merit that his descendants will always be the kings of the Jewish people. However, it seems that Yosef had a much greater merit than Yehuda did. When Yosef was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian noble, Potiphar's wife took a notice to his handsome looks. She then tried every day to seduce Yosef into committing adultery with her, yet Yosef refused every day. On the other hand, when tempted by Tamar, Yehuda gave in and had relations with her, and only later admitted his sin. Wouldn't it seem to be true that Yosef's merit is much greater than Yehuda's merit? Isn't abstaining from sin and not giving into one's desires a much greater merit than admitting to one's sin and doing teshuva? Shouldn't Yaakov have proclaimed Yosef and his descendants as the kings of the Jewish people?

Although Yosef's merit of controlling his desires in regards to Potiphar's wife seems to be greater than Yehuda's merit of admitting his sin by Tamar, there is one great attribute that Yehuda possessed that Yosef did not. Yosef was a handsome, prosperous man, and would often strike jealousy into the hearts of people around him. Yosef unintentionally would attract the ayin hara (evil eye) from people, and this jealousy eventually turned into his brother's hatred for him, which led them to selling him. However, Yehuda was respected and loved as the leader of his other brothers. This is crucial for any monarch to have, even a non-Jewish one. It says in Pirkei Avot, "Anyone with whom the people around him are pleased, Hashem is pleased with him" (3:13). This means to say that someone who is loved by his peers is loved by Hashem. This does not mean, G-d forbid, that the holy Yosef Hatzaddik was not loved by Hashem since his brothers were jealous of him, rather that because of his greatness, he inspired envy of him in many other people. From the fact that Yehuda was chosen to herald the Jewish monarchy and not Yosef, we learn the great importance of having good relationships with other people. It is extremely important to always be at peace with other people and restore any bad relationships we have with others. If we take this message to heart, may Hashem help us to remove *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred) for our fellow Jews from our hearts, and replace it with *ahavat chinam* (baseless love), and with this may we merit to see the coming of Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit Haikdash.

(Yosef Naiman — Continued from page 6)

prove their situations, while those who are not lacking do not feel as compelled to seek brachos? If Yehoshua was already destined for greatness, then perhaps Gidon required that "extra dose" of bracha from Yaakov.

The Ha'emak Davar explains that, on the contrary, a greater leader requires more blessing from Hashem ("shefah yetaira") than a less prominent leader because more is at stake. Yehoshua's responsibilities to Bnei Yisroel were enormous – he was responsible for bringing them into Eretz Yisroel and teaching Torah to the entire nation. Were Yehoshua to fail in these responsibilities, the consequence to the Bnei Yisroel would be enormous. The Land of Israel would not be ours, and Torah would be forgotten.

Gidon's contributions were critical to neutralizing the threat from the Midianites to the Jewish people. After Gidon's victories, there was peace in the Land of Israel. But Yehoshua's contributions were more foundational, and without them there would be no Jewish nation in the Land of Israel, and the link of Torah transmission would have been broken.

If one extrapolates a bit from this answer, there is an important lesson here. It's not the time to start seeking brachos from Hashem when things aren't going our way. Of course we need blessing at such times. But it's when everything seems to be going great that we are in even greater need of Hashem's brachos because there is so much more at stake – there is so much more to lose.

Consider a common fact pattern: happy marriage, good job, nice house, children doing well in school. At such times, it seems we don't need Hashem's bracha. He has already blessed us, you might say. But the fact is that "brachos" from Hashem are a gift, and at any moment, our gifts can be taken from us. The amount of shock we would feel at dramatically changed circumstances should cause us to daven to Hashem for His continued blessing with the same intensity that we would if things were not going so well and we wanted Hashem to change our circumstances.

A simple illustration is that of a wealthy man who supports many tzedaka organizations. Let's say he is a self-made man who wasn't always rich, but he started from nothing and built up a huge business. One can imagine that at the humble

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(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 3)

sounds like three things: he says that one may not be kovea seudah because of kavod shabbos, he says one may eat and drink, and then he says that even though one may eat or drink, he may not be kovea seudah after the time of mincha. So which is it, may one be kovea before mincha or not? The Maggid Mishna explains that the Rambam's first halacha was about being kovea seudah and mishte, then in the third statement he is talking only about being kovea seudah. This is because one has meals every day, so that is only assur from minchah and on, but to make an extra special party, which one doesn't have all the time, would not be allowed on Erev Shabbos at all, and eating just a snack is allowed all the time. This chiluk is expressed in the Shulchan Aruch, who gives the reason that we want to be hungry for Shabbos. Rav Tani Lauer pointed out that there is a fascinating Biur Halacha (who quotes a Darchei Moshe in the name of the Ohr Zarua) that if there is a halacha "protecting our appetite" for the Friday night meal, then we should also have a halacha forbidding eating before the meal in the morning; we should not be able to have a Kiddush (the Darchei Moshe rejects this but the Chofetz Chaim rejects his rejection). Additionally, the Mishna Brurah quotes the reason of the Ramban, that it causes a lack of preperation for Shabbos, and the reason of the Pri Megadim, that it is a bizayon for our Shabbos meal to be just as good as our Friday meal.

III. Exceptions to this rule

- a. The Rema writes that if it is a seuda of Bris Milah or Pidyon Haben, one may have a seudah, because it is a mitzvah to have it that day. Then the poskim discuss if this holds true for a Milah Shelo Bizmanah, or if it should be delayed. The Noda Beyehuda was asked in the case of a town without a siyum, if they could delay a Bris that was already late to Erev Pesach so everyone could participate in the seudah. He responded with a resounding no, that even if the milah was already delayed, there is still a mitzvah to do it at the soonest possible time (a week after the baby is ready for the Bris), and besides for that, we would avoid making a Bris on Thursday or Friday so that we don't force the baby to be a choleh sheyash bo sakanah on Shabbos and potentially have to do melacha for him. However, he does not mention the issue of having the meal on Friday, which implies that it would be allowed for a Milah Shelo Bizmanah.
- b. The Biur Halacha adds in an exception of a Siyum Mesechta. This seems difficult, because one could simply delay it for another day, but nevertheless the Chofetz Chaim writes that a siyum is grounds for a party on Erev Shabbos, and we don't force the mesayem to delay it. This is really touching upon the topic of whether there is a such thing as a zman for a siyum, for example during the nine days when we allow the eating of meat if one finished a mesechta along his regular pace of learning, without speeding up or slowing down.
- c. The Mishna Brurah also quotes another exception in the minhag of tasting all the food for Shabbos. This is to make sure the food is good and doesn't require any extra touches, and if it does, to allow us to fix it. Or, as the Sha'ar Tzion says it is its own mitzvah as a Hachana for Shabbos to get us excited for the food. However, this should obviously just be a tasting and not a major kevius seudah on Friday afternoon.

(Yosef Naiman — Continued from page 4)

beginnings of his enterprise, he may have davened to Hashem daily to make enough money to support his family. And then once his fortunes improved, he davened to make enough money to begin giving charity. Now he is giving millions to charity - the stakes are much larger - if his enterprise fails, how many thousands of other individuals will lose out? Are his tefilos as intense now as they were when he was first starting out, hoping merely to make a meager living? As per the lesson from Yaakov's hand switch, the need for Hashem's "shefah" is even greater, because the stakes are so much greater.



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A Hidden Message in Yaakov's Bracha

BY YOSEF NAIMAN, 11TH GRADE

In Parshat Vayechi, Yosef brings his two sons, Ephraim and Menashe, to be blessed by his aging father, Yaakov. Yosef positions Menashe, the eldest, on Yaakov's right, and Ephraim, the younger son, on Yaakov's left. The ostensible purpose is to have Yaakov bless Menashe with his right hand – the right hand being a source of greater blessing than the left hand.

Famously, Yaakov crosses his hands so that his right hand is on Ephraim, and his left hand is on Menashe, and blesses his two grandchildren. At the end of Yaakov's bracha, Yosef notices that Yaakov had crossed his hands, and tries to move Yaakov's right hand back on to Menashe. Yosef complains: "This is not correct, father. He [Menashe] is the bechor – put your right hand on his head." Yaakov refuses to change his hands back and tells Yosef he knows that Menashe is the eldest. Yaakov explains:

"He [Menashe] too will become a national [hero] and he too will rise. But his younger brother will be greater than he and his descendants will astonish the nations."

Rashi explains that Yaakov foresaw that Gidon would descend from Menashe, and a miracle would be performed through him. However, Yehoshua ben Nun, Moshe's successor, would descend from Ephraim, and would help Bnei Yisroel conquer Eretz Yisroel and teach them Torah. The implication is that Yehoshua was a greater leader. Yaakov's response is intended to explain his actions, but it's not clear how it does so.

One cannot say that by virtue of Yaakov placing his right hand on Ephraim, Ephraim's descendant (Yehoshua) was deemed greater than Menashe's descendant (Gidon). Rather, it appears that Yehoshua was already destined to be greater than Gidon, and therefore precisely because of that higher stature, Yaakov blessed Ephraim with his right hand. That is, the greatness of Yehoshua merited greater blessing.

But why is this the case?

If indeed Ephraim's descendants were destined to be greater, then perhaps Menashe required Yaakov's blessing even more than Ephraim did? After all, isn't it always those who are lacking who seek brachos to im-

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The Meaning of Shema

BY ZACK KALATSKY, 12TH GRADE

It says in Beirishis 49:1 that Yaakov told his children to gather to listen to what he had to say. All of the shevatim were expecting Yaakov to say blessings, but instead Yaakov said that Avraham his grandfather had a child that was evil (Yishmael) and Yitzchak his father had Esav his brother, and he was worried that maybe someone amongst his children was not pure. All at once, the shevatim got up and said, "Hashem is our G-d and he is the only one." Then Yaakov said, "Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity" (Talmud Yerushalmi). The Rambam writes in the Laws of Shema that this episode is the source for the words that we whisper in the Shema after the first line.

But why were Yaakov's worries quieted by the brothers unanimous pledge, why was their declaration of faith to Hashem taken as a guarantee for the future? Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe writes in "Guide for Grooms" that he once asked a group of young men who were about to get married what they will base their marriages on. All expressed the same sentiment, that they will base their marriage on love and understanding. The rabbi explained to them that however well-meaning their intent, they cannot possibly base their marriage on such a thing because they are not at that point yet with their spouses. However, that is what they should strive for. Shema can be called the "mission statement" of the Jewish nation. The Shema not only declares our point of departure but also our final destination. As we say daily, "On that day Hashem will be one and his name will be one!" (Zecharya) With the end in sight and all his children unified in purpose around him, Yaakov was able to give them a glimpse of what paves the way to the Messiah.

Adapted from Rabbi Lam

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(Stories of Greatness — Continued from page 8)

Hershel's companions were all grinning in anticipation. They waited eagerly for their friend's witty riposte in the rabbi-jester dialogue.

Hershel put his hand in his pocket and took out 1,500 zlotys — all the money he had brought with him to replenish his stock. "Here you are, Rabbi," he said quietly, with a strange look on his face. "Here is the entire sum you need to ransom the unfortunate Jew."

All the onlookers were startled for a moment, but then they realized this must be one of Hershel's clever jests. The rabbi would put out his hand for the money, and Hershel would pretend to start to give it to him, and then at the last moment he would snatch it back, making a fool of the naive Torah scholar.

But the tzaddik was not so naive after all. He held back, and simply gazed at Hershel thoughtfully.

"No, no," exclaimed Hershel, as his face took on a fully serious expression. "I really mean it. No joke. Please. Take the money." As he spoke the words, he pressed the bulging purse he had drawn out of his pocket into Rabbi Chaim's hand.

The astonished rabbi felt himself overwhelmed with emotion — excitement and relief at being able to secure the release of the poor imprisoned Jew, amazement that such a supposedly lowly soul could ascend to the highest of peaks in the briefest of moments. His cheeks were flushed; warm tears pooled at the corners of his eyes.

Hershel himself was stunned. He couldn't understand what he had just done. It had been a spontaneous impulse that had overcome him, but why had it been so irresistible?

The tzaddik wished to bless his donor appropriately, but wasn't sure how. For Rabbi Chaim, life turned on one hinge: Shabbat. He had even written a unique book, *Sidduro Shel Shabbat*, explaining the exaltedness and holiness of the Seventh Day according to the mystical principles of the Kabbalah. But how was that relevant to the loutish man who stood before him? Nevertheless, he thought to himself, such a deed deserves the greatest blessing of all. Still brimming with enthusiasm, he exclaimed:

"I bless you that, in the merit of this great mitzvah that you have done, will experience the true taste of Shabbat."

Hershel was still numb. He nodded his head as if he understood what the tzaddik was talking about and answered, "Amen."

That very day Hershel returned to Mosayov. Since he had no money, there was no reason to remain in Czernowitz. Still, he remained his cheerful, joking self.

As the week progressed, however, he began to feel a strange feeling welling up inside him: a spirit of holiness, something he had never felt before in his life. When Friday dawned and the feeling was even more intense, he realized that it must be connected to the oncoming Shabbat, and that this Shabbat would definitely be like no other he had ever experienced.

He went shopping to purchase Shabbat's special foods, and he could barely control his trembling. As the hours went by, his inner upheaval grew stronger and stronger.

All those who encountered Hershel that Shabbat could hardly recognize him. Was that really him singing, dancing, studying, praying with ecstasy? Hershel could barely recognize himself! His entire being was bursting with the sacred pleasure of Shabbat.

It was the talk of the town. The idea that Hershel the clown could be caught up in a tzaddik-type intense love of Shabbat cracked up everyone who heard about it, even more than Hershel's intentional jests. They even entertained the possibility that he had gone insane.

But then the news spread of what had happened at the livestock fair in Czernowitz — the incongruous charitable deed that Hershel had done and the extraordinary blessing of the tzaddik of Czernowitz. People began to consider the "issue" more seriously.

After that Shabbat, Hershel returned to his customary lighthearted, joking manner. But by the following Shabbat he was again overwhelmed by the same spirit of holiness. It was as if there were two Hershels: the weekday persona and the Shabbat one.

Weeks went by, and months, without change in his situation. Hershel felt himself cracking under the strain of his dual personality. He decided to travel back to Czernowitz to discuss his situation with the tzaddik who had blessed him.

Rabbi Chaim told him that in order to absorb the taste of Shabbat without spiritual and psychological damage, he would have to refine his weekday behavior. Hershel decided to stay on in Czernowitz in order to learn more from his new mentor. Soon his daily lifestyle was slowly but steadily shifting to become harmonious with his weekly Shabbat elevation.

In the early 1800's, Rabbi Chaim of Czernowitz moved to the Land of Israel, and his faithful disciple Hershel accompanied him. They lived in the holy city of Tzfat. Today, nearly two centuries later, their burial sites are well known.

STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: NOAM LEVY

This week's story shows us never to underestimate the potential a Jew has. Although sometimes someone may show a rough or unrefined exterior, we may never know what a person truly thinks and how great every person is. Hopefully, in this zechus, we will bring back the Beis Hamikdash for the exact opposite reason it was destroyed - Ahavas Chinum. Adapted from chabad.org. Have a Great Shabbos!

- Noam

Hershel didn't just tell jokes. He breathed them. Certainly it seemed to the people in his native village of Mosayov in the Marmarosh province that he had never drawn a single serious breath in his life. Nothing was too sacred or out of bounds to be the butt of Hershel's hilarity. "Fear of G-d"? The very notion was laughable to Hershel.

As might be expected, Hershel soon became the most popular guy in Mosayov among the idle, the crude, the silly, and the drinkers. Whenever there was a crowd of people on the street or in the village tavern laughing hilariously, one was sure to find Hershel at its epicenter, perfecting his craft.

Hershel himself made a nice living as a seller of livestock. As his business took him to all the neighboring towns and villages, his reputation as a joker spread throughout the Marmarosh region.

Each year, he would travel to the great annual livestock fair in Czernowitz. Another person who consistently attended the fair was the rabbi of that city, the well known tzaddik and

scholarly author, Rav Chaim of Czernowitz. Rabbi Chaim would circulate among the merchants and accord them the opportunity to contribute to the many worthy causes in which he was involved, for helping needy people and supporting educational institutions.

And so it came to pass that Rabbi Chaim was making his rounds of the stalls at the Czernowitz fair when he suddenly came upon a large group of fairgoers laughing raucously, slapping their thighs and winking at each other. No doubt about it — Hershel Mosayover must be in the midst of them. And in top form, too.

Rabbi Chaim thought to slip around them inconspicuously. He knew that from these crude, empty-headed types he could not expect much "business" anyway. But Hershel was quicker than he. "Hey! Holy Rebbe! Shalom aleichem!" he called out, still grinning from the last joke he had successfully cracked.

"Aleichem shalom, my fellow Jews," responded the rabbi warmly. The die was cast. Now he could no longer turn away. "Perhaps you gentlemen would care to take a share in the great mitzvah of charity?"

"And what, exactly, is this charity for?" asked Hershel, still smirking.

"For pidyon shvuyim (redeeming captives), called the greatest mitzvah of all," the rabbi responded promptly. "There is a poor, unfortunate Jew who has a large debt of fifteen hundred zlotys to his local poritz (noble landowner). Now he is languishing in the nobleman's dungeon until the debt is paid."

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