כולל דפילאדעלפיא
PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY KOLLEL

A Parsha Weekly by the Philadelphia Community Kollel

MENUCHA V'SIMCHA

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LET IT GO

BY RABBI BINYOMIN KAHAN

PARSHAS VAYEITZEI

Imagine going to a wedding dressed your best, wearing an expensive hat you save for special occasions. You find your reserved table, place your hat on a chair, and go wash for bread.

When you return, someone is sitting on your hat, completely unaware it's underneath him.

Now that's awkward!

How would you react? You might get upset and tell him to be more careful. Or perhaps you'd politely explain what happened. Either way, he'll likely feel embarrassed.

But what else can you do? It's your hat! You have every right to speak up.

Now imagine choosing not to react. Remaining silent. Willing to sacrifice your expensive hat just to spare someone else embarrassment. Not because you have no right to speak, but precisely because you do.

In this week's parsha, Rachel Imeinu demonstrates this strength far beyond what we can imagine.

Chazal tell us that when Rachel and Yaakov met at the well, they knew they would marry. Aware of her father's trickery, Rachel arranged secret signs with Yaakov to prevent Lavan from replacing her with Leah.

For seven years, Rachel waited as Yaakov worked for her father. Finally, her wedding day arrived. But just as they feared, Lavan planned to switch the sisters.

Rachel had the signs. Everything should have worked out.

Except for one thing.

Without those signs, Leah would be terribly embarrassed. Rachel faced a choice: protect the future she'd waited seven years for, or give Leah the signs and risk losing it all.

What would have been wrong with keeping them? Yaakov was supposed to marry her!

Yet Rachel couldn't bear the thought of her sister's embarrassment. She passed Leah the signs so naturally that Leah wouldn't even realize what Rachel had done.

Rachel wasn't just giving up years of waiting. She was risking her entire future with Yaakov and becoming a mother of Klal Yisrael. She had no way of knowing she would marry him just one week later. Still, she put Leah's feelings first.

Now that takes tremendous strength.

But it doesn't end there. Years later, in the story of the dudaim, Leah accused Rachel of taking her husband. Rachel could have reminded Leah that she was the one originally promised to Yaakov, and that Leah had married him only because Rachel gave her the signs.

And what did Rachel do? Nothing. She remained silent.

But her silence revealed just how great her original sacrifice truly was. Rachel wasn't simply holding herself back to spare Leah embarrassment. She had so completely accepted her sacrifice that even years later, when Leah accused her of taking her husband, Rachel felt no need to remind her of what had really happened.

The Midrash tells us that when the Beis Hamikdash was being destroyed, the Avos pleaded with Hashem on behalf of Klal Yisrael. Even Moshe Rabbeinu pleaded, but their requests weren't accepted.

Then Rachel came forward. She reminded Hashem how she had overcome her own feelings and shown compassion to Leah. Hashem accepted her plea, promising that her children would return to their land.

Perhaps now we can understand why it was specifically Rachel's plea that Hashem accepted.

Rachel wasn't merely asking Hashem to show compassion. She was asking Him to show the very compassion that she herself had demonstrated. Just as she had overcome her own feelings for the sake of her sister, she pleaded with Hashem to overlook the sins of His children and bring them home.

We often think strength means standing up for ourselves, defending what belongs to us, and speaking up when we have every right to do so. But Rachel Imeinu teaches us that sometimes true strength means the opposite.

Because sometimes, the greatest strength isn't in holding on to what is rightfully ours.

It's in being willing to let it go.

LESSONS FROM OUR LEADERS

BY RABBI YEHUDA WAINTMAN



THE AGUNAH OF THE TITANIC

In 1912, a woman named Sarah Meisner approached the Rav of her town, seeking his help. Her husband, Shimon, had sailed aboard the RMS Titanic, hoping to find success in America. Unfortunately, the Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank, and over 1500 passengers drowned. Now, Sarah Meisner, not having heard from her husband, approached Rav Yaakov Meskin, Rav of the city of Nava Praga, and requested permission to remarry. Rav Meskin was born in Vilkomir, Lithuania and studied in the Slabodka Yeshiva, under Rav Yitzchak Rabinowitz (known as Rav Itzele Ponevezher, as he later became the Rav in Ponevezh). He then became the rav of the city of Nava Praga, Ukraine. Rav Meskin later immigrated to America, where he became a Rav in Burlington, Vermont, and later in the Bronx. At the time of the sinking of the Titanic, he was Rav in Nava Praga, where Shimon Meisner lived with his family, and Meisner's wife turned to him to solve her agunah issue. Her position was precarious; her husband's body was not recovered and there were no eyewitnesses to his death. Rav Meskin wrote an intricate teshuva discussing the relevant sugyos, and he concluded that she would be permitted to remarry. He sent the teshuva to his rebbi, Rav Itzele, who concurred with his conclusion. This teshuva was later included in Rav Meskin's sefer Beis Yaakov, which he published in 1930. He also wrote several other seforim, including volumes on Choshen Mishpat and derashos. He passed away in 1956, and this incident remains part of his legacy.

THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY KOLLEL PRESENTS THE

Clear & Concise practical weekly halachos

By Rabbi Shimon Frank

RESPECT FOR SEFORIM

Introduction: *Sifrei Kodesh possess kedushah and must be treated with proper respect and dignity. Although different Sifrei Kodesh have different levels of kedushah, even printed seforim, including Gemaras, siddurim, and other seforim, must be treated with great care. There are many everyday situations in which one can inadvertently show disrespect to a sefer. We will discuss some practical halachos regarding the proper treatment of Sifrei Kodesh.*

עי' בט"ז יו"ד סי' רע"א סוסק"ח, ביה"ל סי' פ"ג ס"ה ד"ה אין, מ"ב סי' מ' סק"ד, וע"ע בשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ב סי' קמ"ג.

Q: What are some halachos regarding respect for *seforim*?

A: A *sefer* should always be treated with respect. It must be handed from one person to another and may not be thrown or tossed around. A *sefer* should not be placed face down, and if found in this position, it should be turned face up. Similarly, a *sefer* should not be stood upside down, and if found in this position, it should be stood right side up.

שו"ע ורמ"א יו"ד סי' רפ"ב ס"ה, בית לחם יהודה סק"ו, ערוה"ש סקי"א.

Q: During *Shemoneh Esrei*, I notice a *siddur* on the floor. Should I pick it up?

A: A *sefer* may not be placed directly on the floor, whether lying down or standing. If a *sefer* falls, it should be picked up immediately, even if one must interrupt his Torah learning. It is customary to kiss a *sefer* after picking it up from the floor. During *Shemoneh Esrei*, if the fallen *sefer* disturbs one's concentration, he may pick it up after completing the bracha he is currently reciting, even if he needs to take a few steps. If it does not disturb his concentration, he should wait until after *Shemoneh Esrei* to pick it up.

רמ"א יו"ד סי' רפ"ב ס"ז, ערוה"ש סקי"א, מ"ב סי' צ"ו סק"ז, שו"ת באר משה ח"ג סי' י"ג.

A PARNASSA "ME'EIN OLAM HABAH"

על פי מחשבה

By Rabbi Yosef Prupas

Berachos 57b:

שבת אחד מששים לעולם הבא.

Bereishis Rabbah 73:11

ויפרוץ האיש — רבי שמעון בר אבא אמר: מלמד שנפרצה לו פרצה מעין דוגמא של עולם הבא.

Similarly, the Gemara (Bava Basra 16b–17a) teaches that the Avos tasted מעין עולם הבא, reflected in the words בכל, מכל, כל. The Rambam (Hilchos Sechirus 13:7) emphasizes Yaakov's extraordinary honesty and effort: כי בכל כחי עבדתי את אביכן, concluding that he merited reward even in this world. The question is obvious: Shabbos, devoted to Hashem, is understandably מעין עולם הבא. But how can work and material prosperity offer that same experience?

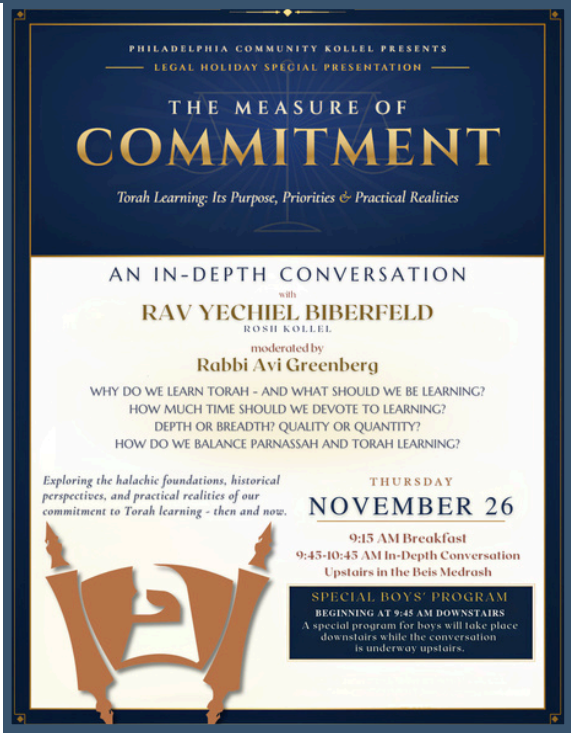
Rav Aharon Lopiansky, citing Rav Moshe Shapiro, explains that מאד represents man's potential—his ability to expand beyond himself by bringing all his kochos into actuality. Yaakov invested his entire being in his work, faithfully and honestly. The Malbim (Yirmiyahu 17:11) teaches that true *bitachon* demands that one's actions reflect complete trust in Hashem; dishonestly earned wealth contradicts that trust.

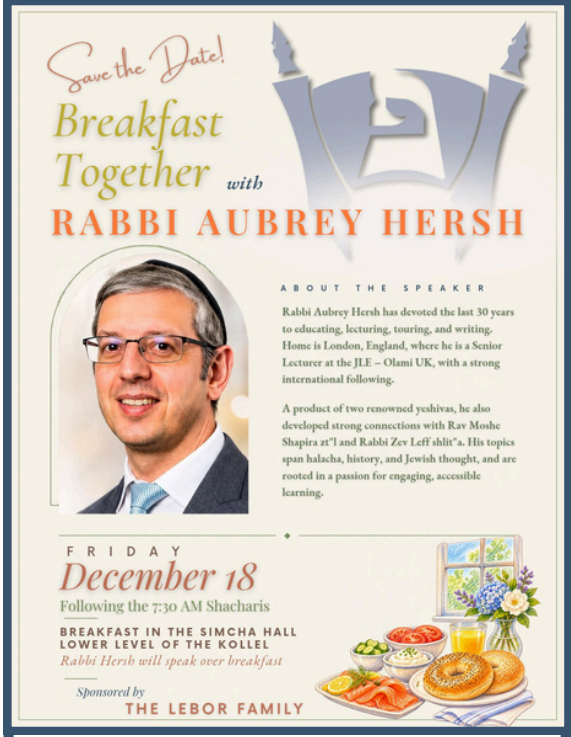
The Pachad Yitzchak explains the two approaches of Shammai and Hillel (Beitzah 16a). Shammai prepared for Shabbos every day, constantly seeking something finer and setting aside the best for Shabbos. Hillel, however, lived each day with *bitachon*, trusting that when Erev Shabbos arrived, Hashem would provide him with what he needed to honor Shabbos. Thus, even Hillel's ordinary weekday eating became an expression of *bitachon*—living every day with complete trust in HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

The Meshech Chochmah explains that *bitachon* is the essential *middah* of Shabbos. Indeed, Klal Yisrael merited Shabbos through their extraordinary *bitachon* in tying the sheep to their bedposts before *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, despite the danger.

The common denominator is *bitachon*. Whether working with all one's strength or refraining from work on Shabbos, one recognizes that everything comes from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. This world is an opportunity to serve Him and realize our fullest potential. Even honestly earned material prosperity becomes a means of connecting to Hashem, and therefore a taste of Olam Haba.

The Chovos HaLevavos teaches that those who live with genuine bitachon experience extraordinary happiness and menuchas hanefesh. Through this closeness to Hashem, a person can experience מעין עולם הבא *even in this world.*





PARSHAS VAYEITZEI
SHABBOS ZEMANIM

Friday, November 20

3:48 pm - Likras Shabbos
4:23 pm - Candle Lighting
4:26 pm - Mincha/Maariv
4:41 pm - Shkiya/Sunset

Shabbos, November 21

8:15 am - Shacharis
8:43/9:19 am - Latest Krias Shema
4:00 pm - Mincha
4:40 pm - Shkiya/Sunset
5:35 pm - Maariv
5:52 pm - 72 minutes
6:30 pm - Masmid
7:30 pm - Rabbi Reisman