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משמרת

אין משפחה בעולם שלומדים
 לפי הסדר של שתי הלכות ביום,
 ולא ראו איזושהי ישועה

בענייניהם

(בעל ההבטחה ממנצ'סטר)



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Door to the Ganav

➤ The tiny Tel Aviv grocery was almost empty at that midday hour, and R' Kalman, utilized the time to study *Ein Yaakov* with Yiddish translation. He always had the *sefer* handy on the check-out counter, next to the pile of papers he would use to tally the bills for customers with his quick hand and sharpened pencil.

A small truck with the logo of the Shemen Company approached the store and stopped at the curb, making a slight screech. R' Kalman put a bookmark inside the *sefer* and stepped outside to help unload the glass bottles full of yellow liquid that had just arrived. An elderly man leaning on his cane stopped to let the two workers carry the heavy bottles inside. A woman holding a basket containing a chirping chicken, quickened her steps as she passed, en route to the shochet's house. Suddenly, it seemed to R' Kalman that he noticed a gaunt figure slipping out of his shop.

"Hey, you there, did you want to buy something?" he called out to the boy, unsure if it was the young, lonely lad who'd recently arrived from Romania, or perhaps someone else who was passing through the area and wanted to buy himself some wafers with the pocket money jingling in his purse.

But when he reentered the store and noticed that his reading glasses had disappeared from the counter, and with them, some canned items from the shelf - he understood that the anonymous visitor who was in a hurry to disappear was apparently a *ganav*---

"Cans, I can understand; he was looking for something of value he could take easily," R' Kalman sighed to his wife Minka that evening, finding it difficult to accept the damage. "But why would he possibly want my eyeglasses...?"

Minka - who was standing at the lit stove, keeping a watchful eye on the milk bubbling

away in the small pot, so it shouldn't run over - listened closely. The story of the strange *ganav* who'd visited their grocery reminded her of what she'd heard last week from Rivkush Friedman, the young neighbor who'd recently moved into the ground floor. She told Minka about a rug hanging on the fence that disappeared, along with her three-year-old Mirush's tattered doll. "What do thieves have to do with a miserable rag doll like that?!" she fumed. She had a hard time calming the little girl, for whom the doll was a precious treasure, and herself, too, for the rug she'd just recently bought from one of the Arab hagglers who came to the market from Yaffo.

Kalman wasn't sure the two incidents were connected. But it was clear to him that he'd do everything to put his hands on the insolent thief. "Looking for easy money, that young fellow." The warm milk was already poured into the high porcelain cups. "Let him go to

work instead of circulating in the streets here and robbing upright people."

After Yankel the watchmaker's shop merited a similar visit, and not long after that, Meshulam's kiosk, and even Dudik the shoemaker's hole in the wall - the picture started to become clear. The accusing finger pointed in one direction - Nachum, the son of Sura the *almanah*.

"How is that fellow not ashamed to go into my shoemaker's shop and try to steal pieces of leather?" Dudik's bulging veins added drama to his fury. "But you don't start up with Dudik," he added with a half-smile, describing how he caught the young *ganav* by his shoulders and shook him out the door in shame, like you shake off raindrops from a coat.

"They say he has a sickness," Kalman explained to Minka, who was back at the stove, cooking oatmeal for the two of them. "A kind of illness that makes him lose control and steal. Steal for no reason, anything within reach."

"Poor Sura..." sighed Minka, feeling the pain of her neighbor who had been raising the child alone for years, after her husband was killed by a heartless Arab horseman. And now, she was beset with such a strange problem.

"They say that he, too, is quite forlorn." A heavy cloud hovered over their modest kitchen. "After he goes out and steals, he sobers up and feels remorseful, so I heard," added R' Kalman. "But we're also forlorn and need to protect ourselves from his antics," he said, twirling the hairs of his graying beard.

Word of the unfortunate thief's illness spread, with the people in the neighborhood feeling anger tempered by compassion, but also watching out for him, so as not to suffer damage at his hands...

Still, one door always remained open to him.

Completely open. Inviting him to come in and become a *ben bayis*.

The door of the S. family.

The helpless, persecuted boy found refuge there, knowing that, in spite of the uncomplimentary title he was labeled with, here he was considered a desirable guest, a real part of the family.

¹ Kleptomania. A mental disorder that is characterized by obsessive theft of different objects, even objects that the patient has no benefit from stealing.

A guest who was liable to slip into his pocket a silver *becher* or a fountain pen that he found on the shelf. A guest who might also pack into his bag the valuable candlesticks handed down in the family. A guest who had to be watched with seventy-seven eyes every moment that he was in the house.

A guest who came into the house from the street, followed often by fierce knocks at the door.

"Is it true that Nachum the *ganav* is staying with you?" An angry face, burning eyes, and empty hands that, just a short while ago held a valuable leather pouch with documents and a sum of money, that disappeared in a moment of distraction ---

But now there was someone to complain to. Someone to argue with, with anger and shouts. "You let him live here, so it's your responsibility," raged the former holder of the pouch.

And the complainants received a calm response from the S. family, apologizing in the name of their guest. Compensating for the damages and losses that he caused.

And they continued giving him the feeling of being a *ben bayis*.

And continued watching him.

And paying the neighbors for the damages. And absorbing the humiliation.

And also paying a therapist to try and treat his kleptomania. And investing their heart and soul in this poor, rejected boy.

In their mind's eye, they didn't see someone named Nachum, and certainly not a lowly thief. They saw the fractured Jewish heart of an unfortunate, miserable young boy, who was not to blame for his situation. They saw the tears of his mother, the *almanah*. They

saw his future, which they could never give up on, because every Jew, no matter how low he has fallen, has a chance.

No effort or investment was too costly or difficult, in view of the generations that he would one day establish for the glory of Am Yisrael. It was as if they were throwing Nachum a lifeline, moments before he would drown---

The electrifying encounter took place in the capital city of London.


On one side stood the figure of a precious head of a family, who had brought forth glorious saplings, the pride of the *kchillah* and its most honorable figures.

Facing him was one of the offspring of the S. family from Tel Aviv.

And in the middle were tremulous feelings of gratitude that no words in the world could capture.

"One small step stood between me and my fate as a miserable thief, spending the rest of his life behind bars," he sobbed. The tears were not ashamed to flow freely down his cheeks, to be absorbed in the fabric of his prestigious business suit. "No one could tolerate my behavior. Not even I myself..." he added in a choked voice. "But in your parents' home, they opened a door for me. They opened their heart for me."


(Based on *Peninei Parshas Hashavua*. Rebbetzin S. was the daughter of Rav Yaakov Rosenheim zt"l.)



Hagaon Rav Ezra Attia once noticed that one of the *bnei hayeshiva* was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, not in keeping with the style of dress in Yeshiva. He debated how to admonish him in a way that would not insult him *challilah*. In the end, he went over and said pleasantly: "You are liable to get a sunburn. It's worthwhile for you to protect the skin of your arms."

(Based on *Chedvas Hachayim*).

Sensitivity to Others
In speaking with a friend - the mouth does not suffice
You also need the heart - to give you good advice.





Stop and Think

B. Haramia

Looking Up from the Square

You promised the babysitter you'd be back by ten thirty. It didn't exactly happen, and you're full of apologies. A thousand and one reasons why you're not at fault. The lateness to work was also totally out of your control and you're flowing with explanations. You hope your sister-in-law was convinced that you really planned to tell her about the half-price sale, just---

And maybe you are a bit to blame?

No! Can't be!! Is there anyone who isn't really convinced? Who thinks that these are just excuses??

The Chofetz Chaim (*Asin 2*) writes that: "A person should do his utmost to save another person from humiliation, just as he would for himself!" That, he says, is why the Torah elaborates on the act of Shem and Yefes, who covered their father Noach, and the *brachah* they received - to teach us the importance of protecting one's fellow from embarrassment. Of thinking how uncomfortable he is liable to feel if his disgrace is exposed and becomes public knowledge. To get inside his heart and display sensitivity.

PLEASE, A HALF DOLLAR FOR TZEDAKAH

Hagaon Rav Tzvi Meir Zilberberg *shlita* told an amazing story of sensitivity to others: Once the Posek Hador, Maran Rav Moshe Feinstein *z"l* was seen at a wedding, approaching the guests and--collecting money for *tzedakah*. This was an absolutely non-routine sight. The explanation his disciples later heard was almost inconceivable: One of the guests at the wedding, who didn't know Rav Moshe, noticed him walking around the hall and stretching his hand out to say "Mazel tov." For some reason, he mistakenly thought that Rav Moshe was asking for donations. Without thinking twice, he pulled out a coin and gave it to the Gedol Hador---

Rav Moshe took the coin, but he was worried. Soon they would seat him at the table of honor, and that man would understand his error and be terribly ashamed --- He had a simple solution. He asked a *talmid* to join him and the two started circulating among the guests and collecting money for *tzedakah*---

You don't have to go far to implement this Jewish feeling of sensitivity and caring for one's fellow Jews. We encounter opportunities every day. It just takes a moment's thought before acting, a brief pause before the words roll off our tongue. To look up from my own square and think about the people around me - how my words or my reaction will make them feel.

Let's read the golden words of the Chazon Ish in his *sefer Emunah Ubitachon* describing a person who is perfect in his *middos*: "There are people who yearn to benefit others. Meeting a fellow Jew gladdens his heart. He receives him warmly and is always concerned as to whether he was on target as to his friend's feelings; perhaps he said something inappropriate? Because, for him, there is no heartache as great as the pain of having insulted his fellow's dignity or denied his friend a kindness."

THE FINE POINTS

It's not always possible to put down rules as to what is proper and good and what should be avoided. Sometimes, we are speaking of fine points. What is important is that one's heart should be full of caring and *ahavas Yisrael*. Everything else will simply come on its own---

Tic-Tac-Toe

B. Halevy



A Little Consideration



When she gets to work, she needs to let off some steam. It isn't easy getting four kids organized on a wintry day. Not to confuse *tehina* with tuna, a permission slip for a class trip with a reminder from the babysitter to bring another package of Pampers... She stirs a cup of coffee with two heaping spoons of sugar - she could use some sweetening - and looks for an available pair of ears to hear her out. Age and family status make no difference, even if it's a childhood friend who was in elementary school with her and doesn't yet have a "Mrs." before her name...



In the afternoon, it's just some chatter with the neighbors. The wintry sun hasn't gone down yet and it's pleasant sitting on the low stone wall. She didn't come down here to gather information. But just in order to not leave her lips too dry, she inquires about her neighbor's little boy's developmental delay. Meanwhile she pushes another piece of pear or apple into the hand of her toddler, who is perched ably on his scooter. Maybe that's how she misses the uncomfortable look of the mother, who isn't eager to reveal the details of her son's evaluation in this forum...

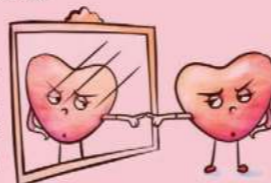


At night, she sits around the table with some cousins at a family *simchah*. This is a one-time opportunity - right opposite some unidentified stuffed dish that puts the Hungarian culinary reputation to shame and stray stir-fried vegetables that try to balance out the caloric value - for everyone to tell a bit about themselves. It's the perfect chance for her to mention the last promotion she got at work, and that's just what she does, adding some hints about her swelling bank account... The bottle of diet soda conceals from her the cousin who was recently laid off and is getting unemployment compensation, for lack of better income. Does that somehow connect with her story??



At this stage, a waitress in a blue apron approaches their table carrying a tray full of small decorative porcelain plates. Hot soufflé, for anyone who didn't fill her quota of calories for the day or who's not starting her diet until tomorrow...

Her portion remains on the tray. She's been gluten-free for more than a decade. But she doesn't let it go by without comment. How can they just ignore the gluten-free guests like that? Tell me, don't people these days have a minimum of sensitivity?!!



Beis Abba in Manchester

The meeting with the Chofetz Chaim, the calendars that came off the presses, and above all, the personal example - in an awe-inspiring conversation with the daughters of the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Hagaon Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, who created and disseminated the daily calendar for learning *hilchos shemiras halashon*

The phone calls to Manchester, England bring to mind the expression, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Rebbetzin Ehrentreu and Rebbetzin Kupetz *tlita*, two daughters of Rav Segal, speak with genuine humility, their kindheartedness streaming through the phone lines - precisely like the personal example they saw in the great home where they were *zochah* to get their *chinuch*.

Opposite the Chofetz Chaim's Image They say your father *z"l* was "Chofetz Chaim Number Two..."

Rebbetzin Ehrentreu and Rebbetzin Kupetz smile at the title. "Tatte was first and foremost a *talmid chacham* and *rosh yeshiva*," says Rebbetzin Kupetz. Rebbetzin Ehrentreu talks about the Yeshiva in Manchester that Saba established: "Saba was born in Russia and learned in Novardok. When he reached draft age, his Rosh Yeshiva told him to flee and to open a yeshiva wherever he finds refuge. Saba came to London and opened Yeshivas Eitz Chayim. Later he was called to Manchester to open a yeshiva there, too, and after his *petirah*, Tatte took his place as Rosh Yeshiva."

"Tatte was *zocheh* to meet the Chofetz Chaim, who was already at a very advanced age," adds Rebbetzin Kupetz. "As a *bachur*, Tatte traveled to Poland to learn in Yeshivas Mir and took the opportunity to go to Radin, to the Chofetz Chaim, then one of the *gedolei hador*."

At Least as a Reminder in Your Pocket

What lay behind his innovative idea to divide the Chofetz Chaim's *sefer* into daily learning segments? Rebbetzin Kupetz: "Tatte himself learned the *sefer* of the Chofetz Chaim. He was very careful with his speech and also avoided any trace of untruth." She described how it pained her father to see that people were violating prohibitions of *lashon hara*, without even knowing the serious things written about it and the fact that people who speak *lashon hara* have no portion in Olam Haba. He decided to get up and make a turnaround.

"People would come to him to ask for a *berachah* or *aneitzah* for *yeshuah*, and he urged all of them to start learning two halachos a day of *shemiras halashon*," the sisters relate. "When they asked him about *chinuch* of children, he always emphasized the point of being exacting with *emes*."

Rav Segal's daughters recall the calendars their father printed - calendars with dates, dividing the study of the Chofetz Chaim's *sefer* into two halachos a day. "Tatte printed thousands of calendars. People wondered at the number of copies, and commented that maybe people would use it as an ordinary calendar, without regard to the division of the halachos..." Rebbetzin Kupetz recalls. "But Tatte was not deterred. He replied that even if they wouldn't learn according to the calendar, the very fact that people would carry it in their pocket - is enough to bring *shemiras halashon* into their consciousness."

Introducing...

R. Tov



Retraced His Steps in the Cold and Snow

Many stories circulate about your father's greatness in *bein adam lachaveiro*...

"I have a little story that happened in his later years, when he was staying once at my sister's home in Monsey," relates Rebbetzin Kupetz. "It was Chanukah. A lot of people came to see the *hadlakah*, and then went out to walk Tatte to shul.

"It was very cold and snowy outside, but, suddenly, Tatte began to retrace his steps... Nobody understood what had happened, but to Tatte, who was already very elderly, the explanation was simple. He'd left the house without saying "Shalom" to his daughter, the hostess..."

What did you, as girls, absorb in your father's great home?

"Tatte was very exacting about what we spoke about and how we spoke," Rebbetzin Kupetz recalls. It was clear to us that we speak differently; that *chinuch* was absorbed in our bones."

"The issue of *tzniyus*, too, was uppermost in his mind," adds Rebbetzin Ehrentreu. "Back then, there was less awareness of the topic, and even though we looked different from everyone else - it really didn't bother us..."

The two interviewees emotionally describe the personal example they saw at home. The hour when Tatte sat every Shabbos and learned Chumash with Ima and the girls. His refined and pleasant conduct. The respectful way he spoke to every person, including in the home, to family members. "The *chinuch* was one of *kavod* and esteem," they say.

"We never heard him raise his voice," emphasizes Rebbetzin Kupetz. "Tatte always spoke pleasantly and gently, staying away from any trace of *machlokes*. He was a genuinely modest person; he didn't hold of himself at all," adds Rebbetzin Ehrentreu, expressing the hope that they would continue the marvelous heritage he bequeathed to them.

Rebbetzin S. Wertzberger with Personal Testimony:

"I was *zocheh* to visit Rav Segal *z"l* and receive a *berachah* from him.

"I came once with my son, who was four years old at the time. The Rav smiled to the youngster and asked gently: "Eliezer, do you speak only the truth?" He added, "Remember always to say only the truth."

The Rebbetzin adds a moving sentence: "A few years later, I came to Rav Segal for a *brachah* and he asked me: "Are you still involved in *shemiras halashon*?" When I confirmed that I was, he *bentched* me that the *zechus* of the Chofetz Chaim should stand by me, and, indeed, I was *zocheh* to see great *yeshuos*. All of the success of Mishmeres HaShalom that there is today, the huge empire that we see - is all in his *zechus*."

Mountain

out of a Molehill



An impoverished Jew from Eretz Yisrael decided to go abroad to collect money for a medical need. His plan was to stay at his brother's home in Williamsburg as a base for his fundraising trip.

He called his brother hesitantly, told him that he's planning to go collect money in America, and asked if it would be possible for him to stay at his brother's home for the two weeks he'd be in Williamsburg.

His brother immediately responded, "No problem. It will be our pleasure to have you!"

The Jew began to get organized for his trip. He went to the travel agent and ordered a ticket. His wife packed the suitcase and prepared a carry-on bag with food for the way and some *sefarim*. He said goodbye to his family and set off for the airport.

After the tiring check-in process, the Jew finally got into his seat on the plane. He put on his seatbelt and prepared for takeoff. Before the plane took off, a niggling thought entered his mind: "Who says that my brother really wants me to come to him? Maybe he gave an enthusiastic 'Yes' just because it was uncomfortable for him to say 'No' to me. I'll buy him a nice gift from the Duty-Free shop to

curry his favor." With that decision made, he closed his eyes.

After a light doze, he awoke, and again, the doubts buzzed in his mind: "Does my brother really love me? It's been a few months since he's spoken to me. Maybe he doesn't really want me to come..."

After much thinking, he decided that when he'd come to his brother's house, he'd ask his brother directly if he really wants him to stay there. If he senses that the answer is positive - then fine. But if his fears materialize, he'll have to find other accommodations and release himself from the unnecessary pressure of staying with a brother who doesn't want him.

As the flight progressed, the gnawing concerns got stronger, until the thought sneaked into his heart: "I don't understand. He's my brother. How could he refuse to host me? I'll barge into his house and tell him unequivocally: 'I don't care if you don't want me and don't love me. I'm your brother and I'm staying here!'"

The thoughts continued: "What did I ever do to him that he hates me so? What kind of chutzpah is this - to refuse to host his brother, who's coming from Eretz Yisrael to collect money, while he himself lives a comfortable life?"

The plane landed. The words he would say were formulated in his mind and he waited for the moment when he could hurl all his arguments in his brother's face.

In the taxi on the way to Williamsburg, he practiced his speech over and over, and the closer he got to his destination, the sharper the

sentences became.

The moment the driver declared, "We're here," he grabbed his suitcase dramatically, threw open the gate to his brother's house in a fury, barged through the front door, and roared: "My dear brother, it makes no difference to me how dear you are and what a brother you are, but I'm here. And if you have a problem with that, you can get out of here."

A tense silence descended on the beautiful house, which was decorated with colorful posters saying, "Welcome, our dear uncle," the table laden with delicacies in honor of the special, beloved guest.

Everything froze; everyone became mute, as they stared at him with a strange look, as if he'd just landed from Mars, not from an airplane.

He needed just one second to grasp the great snafu.

After he'd come back to himself and was sitting on the comfortable couch, he realized that for days, everyone here had been busy with feverish preparations, as they looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the uncle from Eretz Yisrael - from the meticulously colored drawings to the freshly baked pastries prepared especially for him. Everyone sought to give him the best feeling possible, as if he was coming for a family visit, and not to collect money.

All he wanted at those moments was for the earth to swallow him up. He blushed a deep red and was overcome by embarrassment. "What a fool I am. How could I speak like that to my brother? How did I arrive at such far-fetched thoughts?"



It's embarrassing to reveal that all of us think such heretical thoughts from time to time.

"Maybe Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't love me at all. Maybe I was born to suffer. Maybe it's the irony of fate that I should look this way - without *parnassah*, unable to find my *zivug*, or having problems with my children..."

And then we build in our heads mountains of "solutions." We "fly" to Western Europe, Eastern Europe; we try all the *segulos* in the world so that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will send us the *yeshuah*.

But we don't grasp that Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves us and wants to pour on us all the good there is. And all he asks of us is one thing: To

All he wanted at those moments was for the earth to swallow him up. He blushed a deep red and was overcome by embarrassment. "How did I arrive at such far-fetched thoughts?" he thought to himself.

behave properly. The Chofetz Chaim writes it explicitly:

"כמו ש'האדם כובש את עצמו ובולם פיו מלדבר דברי גנות על חברו... פן למעלה אין המקטרג יכול לפתח פיו לדבר קטגוריא."

"Just as a man controls himself and keeps his mouth in check from saying derogatory words about his friend... So, Above, the Mekatreg, the Great Accuser, cannot open his mouth to prosecute."

It is as if Hashem is saying: "I will deal with you precisely as you deal with my children. Speak good about my children so that I will be able to do good for you. And if you want to speak bad about my children, just don't speak to me at all." We don't need to seek manipulative ways to effect what we want in Shamayim. We simply need to make sure not to block the pipeline of *shefa* that Hashem has prepared to stream *berachah* into our lives.

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves a man more than he loves himself. He wants only the good of Am Yisrael, that no slander should be said about them at all... And someone who speaks *lashon hara* causes the opposite of this; therefore he is so despised."

Yes, Hashem wants to do good for His creations. But if we do the opposite, we sabotage our bond with the Ribono shel Olam with our own hands.

We are not speaking about vague recommendations, but about explicit statements in Chazal.

Maran Hagaon Rav Yehuda Zev Segal zy"a, known as the "Baal Hahavtachah of Manchester," promised that "There is no family who learns the 2 halachos a day regularly that has not seen a *yeshuah*."

All the more so, one who works to spread the message of *shemiras halashon* among all of Am Yisrael, and in whose merit, *kitrugim* are averted against all of Am Yisrael - will certainly merit seeing *yeshuos*.

And this is not the result of some vague "wonder"; these are clear and simple statements of Chazal that we just need to open our eyes and notice.

Watch your tongue, spread *shemiras halashon*, and you will see all the *yeshuos*.



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מפיצים שמירת הלשון, מעבירים את שמכם ובקשתכם למעמד ותזכו לישועה, וזוכים לישועה.

From the Back Door

Did someone ever speak lashon hara about you? Do you remember how you felt?

Did you ever hear lashon hara about someone you love very much? How much did you cringe when someone dear to you was insulted?

The Chofetz Chaim writes in *sefer Shemiras Halashon* (Part 1, *Shaar Hazechirah*, 2:5): "If someone speaks *lashon hara* about his fellow and stirs up strife against him, he rouses *kitrug* Above against Am Yisrael and invests the Satan with the strength to prosecute the Jews... Woe to those who... aren't concerned for this and don't know that the *hisorerus* Above hinges on the *hisorerus* below, for better or worse."

The Chofetz Chaim continues: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu is very exacting about this sin, more than others, so much so that He doesn't want to have anything to do with the *baal lashon hara* or to save him from his troubles..."

This is because "Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves a man more than he loves himself. He wants only the good of Am Yisrael, that no slander should be said about them at all... And someone who speaks *lashon hara* causes the opposite of this; therefore he is so despised."

We all need *yeshuos*. Every one of us has challenges and we all *daven* that our lives should work out the best way possible. There are so many *segulos* that people try to do in order to assuage their pain.

But, without making light of these efforts - how can *segulos* help when Hakadosh Baruch Hu *kivyachol* doesn't want to deliver us from our *tzaros*?

The first thing we need to do is to break down the barriers keeping us from reaching the Kisei Hakavod, so that Hashem will listen to our pleas. Then, perhaps we won't need to seek a roundabout way to access the *hashpa'os* that Hashem wants to send us.

Hashem is waiting for us to do complete *teshuvah* on the sin of *lashon hara*, a sin that people unfortunately sometimes regard lightly. We cannot even remember if we hurt someone or said bad things about another Jew, and yet we need to atone for these sins.

Therefore, first of all, we need to make a resolute decision not to speak about people. We will guard our tongue with all our strength and do everything we can to avoid lapsing into *lashon hara* or *rechilus*.

It is very difficult to atone for *lashon hara*, because for *aveiros bein adam lachaveiro*, even Yom Kippur does not atone until we conciliate the one we hurt. For *lashon hara*, this can be a very complex - and at times, impossible - *derech teshuvah*. Therefore, the *gedolei hador shlita* ruled for us according to the Rambam, and as the Chofetz Chaim said many times - to accept upon ourselves to spread *shemiras halashon* as a *teshuvah hamishkal*.

Imagine if, thanks to your efforts to spread *shemiras halashon*, you prevented "one word" of *lashon hara* - how much suffering did you spare people? How much *machlokes* did you prevent?

The seed of every *machlokes* is one "misplaced word," which brings so much pain and suffering in its wake. If, thanks to you, hundreds of thousands of such words are averted, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will deal with you *middah k'neged middah* and atone for you. He will open His great treasure house to shower you with everything you need. Suddenly, the barriers will melt away, the blocks will crumble, and you will find that you can speak with Hashem and your *tefillos* are accepted.

When the first fifth-generation grandchild was born to Hagoon Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, one of his disciples came to wish him 'Mazel tov' and said: "Rabbeinu, you were *b'H zocheh* to what it says in the *Leket Yosher* (vol. 2, YD 3), that 'Anyone to whom a fifth generation is born will not see the face of Gehinnom.' If so, we can give the Rav another 'mazel tov' on his entrance ticket to Gan Eden." Rav Elyashiv replied, "I'm not looking for *protektzia* to get in from the back door; I want to come in from the front door."

There is no need for roundabout ways. You can simply enter from the front door.

We all need *yeshuos*. Every one of us has challenges and we all *daven* that our lives should work out the best way possible.

Self Test

Since *lashon hara* is such a severe transgression, with critical consequences, it is very important to make a *cheshbon hanefesh*, a personal reckoning, to determine if you ever slipped into *lashon hara*.

Before you make the *cheshbon hanefesh*, it is important to keep a number of rules in mind!

1. You need to ask *ashe'vilas chacham* as to whether it is proper to conciliate the person you spoke *lashon hara* about, or whether the victim is liable to be hurt again when you ask forgiveness.
2. The prohibition of speaking *lashon hara* applies also to speaking about public personalities and known figures, not just friends.
3. You need *kapparah* even for *lashon hara* that was spoken at a young age.
4. Hearing *lashon hara* without protesting is regarded halachically as speaking *lashon hara* and is a very great sin.
5. The prohibition of speaking *lashon hara* applies also to something that is common knowledge.

Now: Try to reconstruct all the conversations you participated in during the course of your life.

- If you are certain that you never lapsed into the *aveirah* of *lashon hara* - *Ashreichem!*
- If you *chas v'shalom* committed the sin of *lashon hara*, atone for it by asking forgiveness, admitting your sin, having remorse for the past and accepting upon yourself precautionary measures to avoid faltering in the future, and also a *kabbalah* to learn 2 halachos a day!
- If you don't remember, or if you remember but cannot ask forgiveness: Do *teshuvah hamishkal*: Guard your tongue from now on, spread *shemiras halashon*, and also take upon yourself to learn 2 halachos a day from *sefer Chofetz Chaim!*

Special issue for the Mishmeres HaSholom kids

פנתי הקטנה



Ask the Rav

By Harav Hagoon R' Menachem Mendel Fuchs shlita, Rav of Mishmeres HaSholom

Girl Who Brings a Cell Phone to Class

Question: One day, at recess, when I bent down to pick up something, I noticed three girls crouched under a desk. One was holding a cell phone and showing something to her friends. When they realized I'd seen them, they were very frightened. The girl with the phone begged me not to tell anyone. What am I supposed to do in such a situation? Last year, this girl was already caught once, when the phone she had in her book bag rang in the middle of class, and she was punished.

Answer: Even though it's not the students' job to report to the teacher or principal about a friend who

did improper things, still, when we're talking about a friend who is *chotei* and *machti* - influencing others to do as he's doing - the student is obligated to immediately report it, to prevent damage, *chalilah*, especially in this case, when this school is so firmly against students holding a cell phone in class.

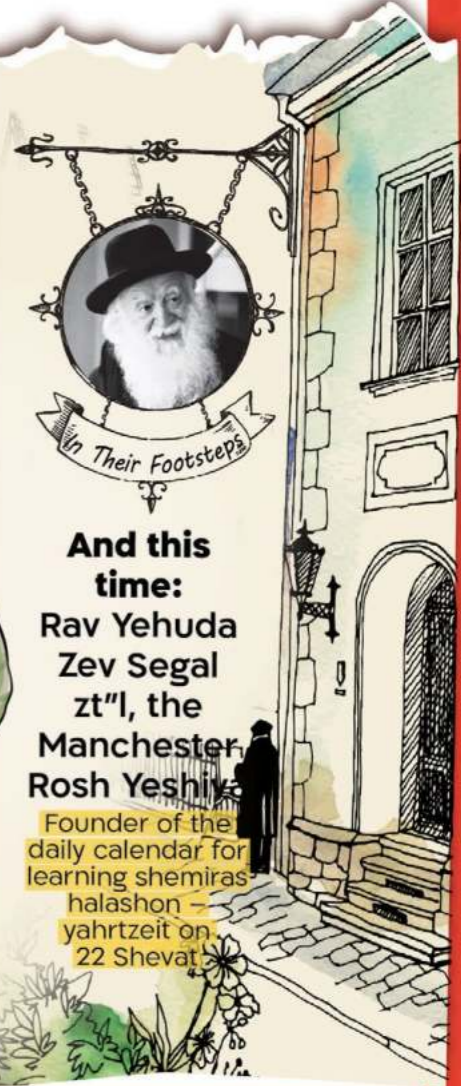
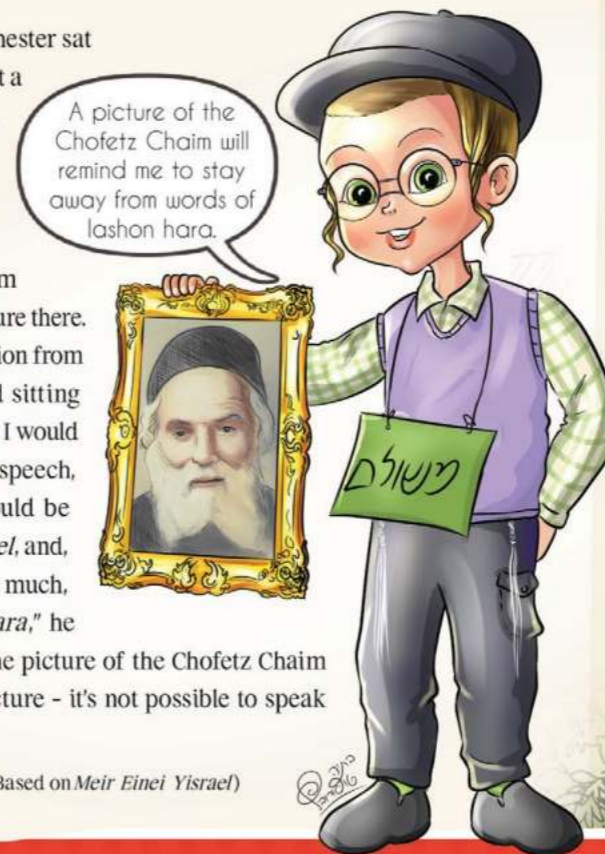
Therefore, the questioner should reveal the story to her teacher, being careful to have only constructive intentions, without a trace of desire for revenge, etc. creeping into her heart.

At Nichum Aveilim

When Rav Segal of Manchester sat shivah for his brother, he put a picture of the Chofetz Chaim *zy"l* on the table next to him.

One of his *talmidim* who came to be *menachem* him was surprised to see the picture there. He heard a moving explanation from Rav Segal: "When I started sitting shivah, I was concerned that I would be in danger of prohibited speech, because many people would be coming to be *menechem aveil*, and, perhaps, when speaking so much, I might slip into *lashon hara*," he said. "So I decided to put the picture of the Chofetz Chaim on the table. Next to his picture - it's not possible to speak *lashon hara*..."

(Based on Meir Einei Yisrael)





War of the Rolls

Even before Mordy opened his eyes on Sunday morning, he knew that something had happened to his throat. His brain was still half-asleep, but he felt as if someone had tied up his vocal cords, and instead of the sweet, clear voice he always had, nothing came out of his mouth but a strange croak---

Ima checked, first of all, if he had fever. *Baruch Hashem*, the thermometer showed a normal temperature. Then she suggested that he come to the kitchen and drink hot cocoa. Sometimes that helps to relax the throat. Just to be sure, she called to make an appointment with the pediatrician.

Only when they were on the way to the doctor did Mordy suddenly remember---

The wedding!! The exciting wedding of Uncle Eliezer - would be on Wednesday!!

And, at the wedding, they - that is: all the grandchildren - were supposed to sing a moving song for Saba, who's marrying off his *ben zekunim*.



What's more, Mordy had been chosen to be the soloist because of his melodic voice---

But with the hoarseness he had now, it sounded unlikely. Almost impossible.

"A little redness, slightly swollen glands," the doctor said after a quick glance. "There's a virus like that going around now," he added.

The doctor didn't have time to hear about the wedding and the song and the solo. There was a long line outside his door. He just printed out a prescription for a syrup that could help, and added a very important instruction: "Give the throat a few days' rest. Don't strain the vocal cords." In other words - be quiet.

Being quiet is not easy at all, but Mordy followed the instruction devotedly. The wedding was so close...

"You can't decide against everyone's opinion!" Yissachar and Eliezer stood on chairs, screaming at the top of their lungs. Another few boys joined them with loud cries."

"Who's everyone?" Reuvy scoffed at them, a huge group of boys behind him. "Most of the class is with us!"

"What is it worth, a Siyum without nosh?!" That was Tzvi, from the second group.

"What are you, babies??"

"You're babies. See how you're fighting and being stubborn..."

"You're the stubborn ones..."

"Are not! You---"

No one even tried to hear the other group's opinion. They just argued and screamed and---

Suddenly Reuvy, leader of the "Challah Rolls" group, stopped

and looked around, searching for something.

And he found it. Mordy. "Hey, Mordy, why are you sitting there quietly? Join us! Help us with the argument against these annoying kids!"

But Mordy remained silent. He couldn't waste his words like that.

Even though he had ple-e-e-enty to say. Even though he definitely liked to state his opinion, and he also thought that the boys in the other group were just---

Because Mordy was saving his voice. He had to. The wedding would be on Wednesday and he needed to sing a solo for Saba---

Mordy had to give the shortest answer possible. A few words, and no more.

"I...I..." he began, trying to think how to explain his position in the fewest words. Suddenly he thought to himself that, actually... what difference does it make if they serve rolls and kugel or cookies and pretzels? Why do they have to cackle like roosters...?

"Nu, Mordy, say something," screamed Reuvy. "Tell us your opinion!"

Mordy didn't say anything. Instead, he took a pen and paper and wrote a few brief words:

I don't want to waste my words.

The food at the Siyum is not the main thing. It's the simchah shel Torah...

A moment of shock.

Silence in the classroom.

Until now, the screams closed everyone's ears. Brain. Heart.

Now, thirty boys managed to think with a drop of logic and to understand how ludicrous this argument was. How unnecessary. To understand that, actually...

It's a shame to waste *their* words, too, and especially on fights and screaming.

"You know what?" Reuvy fixed his eyes on Mordy's note, and then on Mordy himself. "I also don't want to waste my words on a fight. Words are really something you need to watch..."

To answer, call 072-337-2212 Ext. 33

Whoever answers correctly enters a raffle for prizes
Last month's winner: Moshe Yehoshua Reich, Ashdod



Answering K'halachah

Messy Room

"This is your room?" Malkie asks her friend Estie, when they enter the room to do homework together. "Yes, together with my sister Ayala," Estie responds.

Malkie eyes Ayala's briefcase, with all its contents scattered on the bed, along with some other items, and makes a face.

"It must be very annoying to share a room with such a messy sis---" Malkie stopped in mid-word, because Ayala suddenly ran into the room to look for the library book that had disappeared...

Ayala didn't hear what Malkie said, but she understood that they had spoken about her. That night, she tried to ask her sister what exactly Malkie had said---



Look up *sefer Chofetz Chaim, Klaf Aleph, Se'if Aleph*, and also in *Hilchos Rechilus, Klaf Aleph, Se'if Bels*, call 072-337-2212 Ext. 3, and choose the most appropriate answer. Those who answer correctly will automatically enter a raffle. *The recorded question and answers are in Hebrew only.



The prize-winning idea was sent in by: Shevly Elchadad, Bnei Brak

You're invited to send us stories suitable for this column: stories in which a friend was almost hurt or embarrassed, and thanks to someone's sensitivity, it was prevented, and also stories in which, sadly, a friend was hurt. The stories chosen for the magazine will earn the sender a prize. M025379160@GMAIL.COM | 02-650-6107



No Offense

The Curtain Opens

The alarm clock rang, and Shani tried hard to open her eyes. Yesterday they'd come back late from the Sheva Berachos that the *chasan's* aunts had made. Being the sister of a *kallah* is not only exciting; it's also tiring. But Ima said that she already missed enough school and now she needs to get back into routine.

Somehow, she managed to locate her notebooks, put on her backpack, and rushed off to school, arriving just as the bell rang and walking into the class with the teacher.

Tefillah, Chumash, recess, and then the teacher announced: "Girls, go down to the hall. The drama coach is waiting for you."

For a moment, Shani was sure she'd heard wrong. But the next moment, her heart started pounding, and without thinking, a startled question escaped her lips - "What?? You started practicing for the Bas Mitzvah performance?"

Sari and Efrat didn't hear her question. Tamar and Dassy heard and responded - Yes, sure, they've been rehearsing the choir and also the musical play since the beginning of the week, and how could it be that Shani hadn't heard about it...?

Choir. Musical play. Rehearsals for the performance that all the girls in sixth grade look forward to so much. For five days she'd missed school because of her sister Basya's wedding, and precisely on those days, it all happened...

They probably gave out the parts already. They must have learned all the motions. And what will be with her?



A Few Words from Shani:

What could have happened:

The hall was filled end to end with mothers and grandmothers who'd come for the performance. On stage stood all the sixth graders, excited and happy. In another moment, the curtain would open---

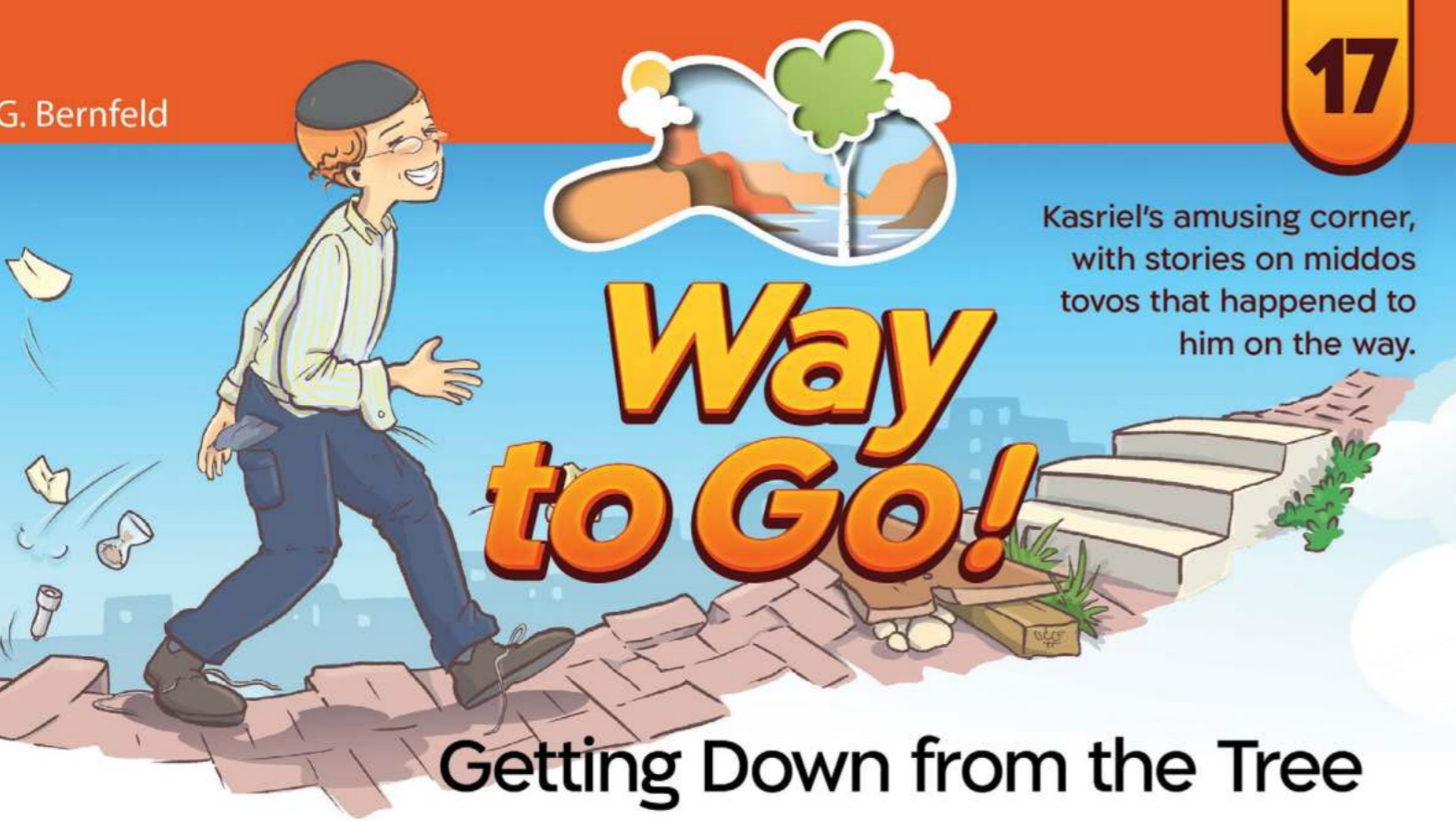
And amid all the tumult, no one will notice one dejected girl who cannot keep up with the motions---

What happened in the end:

"Hey, Shani, you had a wedding, right?" Naomi apparently noticed my hesitant steps as I entered the hall. "So you weren't at the practices yet at all?" she asked. "Want to come to me after school and we'll practice together?"

Sure I wanted. And Naomi devoted time to make up everything I'd missed. And in the end, I was even chosen for a good part in the musical play.

I cannot thank Naomi enough for what she did for me. Maybe after she reads the story in this column, she'll understand what a lifesaver she was...



Kasriel's amusing corner, with stories on middos tovos that happened to him on the way.

Way to Go!

Getting Down from the Tree

Boys in books - I'm sure you're familiar with them - are good and noble. They don't get entangled in incidents, like I do. And when it does happen to them - say, maybe once in six years - there's always an adult who asks them gently, "Tell me, wonderful young man. How did you get here?"

Why am I telling you about those boys from the books, instead of about myself? Because this week I asked myself that question, when I found myself picking up a trembling foot, trying to find... a branch I could step on (without its breaking).

Two long scratches on my right leg and a deep pain beneath my left knee made that a painful question. The question also demanded an answer: How did I get to the top of this pomelo tree? And how do I get down from it? The moment I started giving an answer (connected to Tu B'shevat, and what the *pasuk* says about man being like a tree of the field), I felt a bang on my head and lost my concentration. It was a heavy, yellow pomelo. I'd just wanted to pass beneath it to grab the branch at its left, but - BOOM! When I collided with it, I understood how problematic this tree is.

And what trouble I'm in.

What does a Yid do when he's in trouble? Looks up to Shamayim. I tried looking up, but I was afraid I'd lose my balance even more (I was already wobbling among the branches...). I preferred to look downward. To see the gray sidewalk. To finish this adventure. But I could still mumble, so I asked Hashem, in simple words, to help me. "I made a big mistake when I tried reaching the treetop. Please get me out of here unharmed." It's true that the Sternlichts let people

pick pomelos off their tree, but apparently, they envision adults climbing up a small ladder, not kids like me scrambling up the tree ... And they certainly didn't mean that they stand next to the tree day and night and offer rescue services. "Please, Hashem, help me. And L..." You know me as Kasriel the mischievous, but sometimes, even I am serious. My body shook from side to side, but my thoughts remained steady. I tried to think what I should take upon



myself in order to get down safely from the tree... Wait. Tree. All of a sudden, I had a brainwave. I remembered that trees are silent, and I knew what I'd take upon myself. "A *taanis dibbur*," I said, closing my eyes. "I take upon myself *bli neder*, that during the hours..." I stopped for a moment to figure out which hours are suitable.

Taanis dibbur. Imagine what a great *zechus*. I thought that maybe I'd go a step further and wouldn't even say "Nu, uh." No, I'd make that *taanis* an absolutely silent silence. But before I could decide which hours are appropriate, I noticed Yerachmiel, a neighbor my age, running on the sidewalk beneath me and... whoops, he passed right by...

Yerachmiel! How typical of him! To pass right by a boy who's moaning and in trouble, instead of stopping to help--- My bitter thoughts started flying: Examples, details, memories. But suddenly I had a different thought. *Taanis dibbur*? Absolute silence? Maybe a better *kabbalah* would be to be a little less judgmental? To give Yerachmiel the benefit of the doubt and assume that he didn't see or hear me, or that he doesn't want to butt in, or he's afraid he'd embarrass me, or---

The thoughts were interesting, but they were cut short because of the window that opened over Sternlicht. Someone stretched out his head and called: "Need help?" And that's how I got down, *baruch Hashem*. That's how I breathed, and drank, and sat. Only the next day did I continue thinking about Yerachmiel who didn't stop to help me and why. I won't go into details about those thoughts. First of all, I imagine that you, too, could be *edan lchaf zechus* (you'll do it well even if you're reading this on the couch, not swinging among branches), and second of all, because I have other thoughts about my *kabbalah*. Right now - nu-eh-nu-uh - a *taanis dibbur* is not on the horizon. To judge favorably - is.



What Is Important to Elisha

Elisha can't go to . He's sick. Elisha can't go to the ; he can't go on the or down the . Elisha also can't ride his and can't meet his in the yard. He's bored at . He just talks a little on the with who call to ask how he's feeling.

Too bad. There are so many important things that he cannot do now.

He tries to think: What can he do inside the ?

Suddenly, he has an idea.

Nosson is also sick. He heard that from the he spoke to on the .

But Nosson doesn't have a lot of . Probably nobody is calling him to ask how he's feeling.

Elisha takes the and dials Nosson's number.

This important thing - he *can* do now, even when he is sitting at , sick.

Pictionary:



RAFFLE WINNERS FOR THE PUZZLE SECTION:
ZOHARA OREN, ALON MOREH

Tu BiShevat Triple Puzzle

First - solve the clues below. Second, find and circle the words (solutions to the clues) in the grid - but most of the words are scrambled. The words appear horizontally or vertically but not diagonally. Third - color in the letters in the circled words and a special shape will appear!

For example, one clue is: *Given on Har Sinai* (5 letters). The answer, TORAH, appears in scrambled form - highlighted below.

A	R	L	T	H	E	A	W	Q	U	Z
F	E	N	E	T	I	F	F	E	S	N
I	A	P	R	E	S	G	G	I	F	L
R	S	I	N	M	M	I	U	P	K	A
E	E	E	Y	A	R	B	L	S	R	S
S	V	O	R	T	H	A	T	U	U	T
E	L	N	A	L	H	O	S	M	T	E
T	O	S	T	I	R	F	U	L	N	D
W	I	V	H	A	S	T	E	I	B	U
Y	E	S	L	N	O	M	A	D	O	R
G	U	A	R	U	D	B	D	Y	T	I
L	K	I	H	E	T	R	C	L	A	P
A	N	T	A	P	L	A	F	I	S	H
S	H	E	M	I	N	R	A	S	T	O
C	E	T	I	R	A	O	V	R	I	N
O	M	N	I	B	P	U	S	O	F	Y
T	E	G	A	R	P	N	E	M	O	A
S	I	N	H	T	B	E	N	I	U	L
N	O	N	I	S	E	H	T	D	N	P

Clues:

- From the 7 Minim, also known for its leaves (3)
- Its pips remind us of the mitzvos (11)
- Hebrew word for speech (5)
- Omer was made from this (6)
- Borei pri ha'etz - on _____ (6)
- Eat them as a nut, butter, or milk (7)
- Green, black, or oil (6)
- Date in Shevat for trees' Rosh Hashanah (English) (7)
- Date in Shevat for trees' Rosh Hashanah (Hebrew) (2)
- Body of a tree (5)
- Sow seeds (5)
- Goes together with Tu (8)
- Man is compared to them - "Ki ha'adam..." (5)
- Crush them to make wine (6)
- Seven of these in Eretz Yisrael (5)
- Given on Har Sinai (5)
- First sprout of a fruit or flower (3)
- Purple fruits with a pit (5)
- Opposite of down (2)
- Basic bread ingredient (5)

Send solutions to Mishmeres HaShalom
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Raffles follow the protocol at
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will be informed

Name:

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MELTING THE ICE

Written by B. Halevi
Illustrated by R. Fus

1

