

Parashas
Vayikra
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ג' ניסן תשפ"ו
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קהילת שבתי בבית ד'
בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
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טיב הקהילה

English edition Purim

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

חובת השינון והחזרה ותועלתה

The Obligation of Review and Repetition and Its Benefit

וְאִם מִן הַצֹּאן קָרְבָּנוֹ מִן הַבָּשִׂימִים אוֹ מִן הָעִזִּים לְעֹלָה זָכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבנוּ: (א, י)
And if his offering is from the flock, from the sheep or from the goats, for an olah offering, he shall offer an unblemished male. (1:10)

Rashi explains: And if from the flock – The “ו” adds to the previous matter. Why was it interrupted? To give Moshe space between one section and the next.

Let us expand somewhat in explaining the words of Rashi before us, for aside from their simple explanation there is in his words a lesson regarding the study of Torah and its acquisition.

At the beginning Rashi explains: “The letter vav adds to the previous matter.” The letter vav in the word “Ve’im” connects this section, which speaks about the laws of the olah offering from sheep, with the preceding section that deals with the laws of the olah offering from cattle, thereby revealing that their laws are equal. That is to say, even the laws and obligations that are explained only in one of them are obligatory in both of them. Therefore, the olah of sheep also requires semichah [leaning] and skin removal, even though these are stated explicitly only regarding the olah of cattle. Likewise, the olah of cattle requires slaughter in the north, even though this obligation is stated explicitly only regarding the olah of sheep.

Concerning this, Rashi sought to teach us: why did the Torah interrupt? That is to say, why did the Torah need to divide them into two sections? Their laws are equal, and it could have included the two types of olah offerings in one section and incorporated within that section all their laws and obligations. What reason is there to divide them into two sections and to repeat the principal matters that are explained in both? The answer is: in order to give Moshe space to reflect between one section and the next — so that Moshe Rabbeinu would first contemplate some of the laws, and only after the matters would become clear and settled in his mind would more be added to the earlier ones.

It is self-evident that the Torah did not interrupt between one section and the next merely in order to tell us how the matters were said to Moshe. Rather, it was also to instruct us regarding the obligation to contemplate between one section and the next. Moreover, we see in Chazal (Nedarim 38a) that Moshe Rabbeinu himself did not need to contemplate between the sections at all, since in any case it would not have been within human ability to grasp the Torah — which is longer than the sea — within the few forty days that he was in Heaven, except through a miracle. And indeed, he merited this, as hinted to in the wording of the posuk (Shemos 31:18), ויתן אל משה ככלתו לדבר, - “And He gave to Moshe when He finished speaking with him,” meaning that he attained the Torah through a miracle and without toil, like a bride who is given to the groom without toil.

Since his attainment was not dependent upon nature, he did not require interruptions in order to gain clarity. The reason that HaKadosh Baruch Hu nevertheless arranged it with interruptions was only for

טיב המערכת

מחוץ למחנה אל מקום טהור
Outside the camp to a pure place

We have just entered the month of Nissan, the month of redemption, and in a few days we will all sing, “And HaKadosh Baruch Hu came and slaughtered the Angel of Death,” which is what will happen in the future. The holy Baal Shem Tov asks about this: Why does the yetzer hara—the Angel of Death—deserve such a punishment? After all, he is merely carrying out his role.

The Baal Shem Tov answers that one of the tactics of the yetzer hara is that he entices a person to commit a transgression by claiming that it is a mitzvah, and this matter is considered a sin on the part of the yetzer hara. For he was granted permission to incite a person to transgression, but not to deceive him and say about a transgression that it is a mitzvah, and for this he is destined to be punished by slaughter.

Our parashah—the portion of the offerings—details the types of offerings and the manner of their performance. Now regarding the offering of the anointed Kohen, the Torah says (4:12): והוציא את

הפר אל מחוץ למחנה אל מקום טהור אל שפך הדשן ושרף אותו על -עצים באש' כל “And he shall take out the entire bull to outside the camp, to a pure place, to the place where the ashes are poured, and he shall burn it on wood with fire.” Seemingly, the lengthiness of the posuk is not understood—why is it necessary to specify “to outside the camp, to a pure place”? Would it not have been sufficient to write “outside the camp”?

On this question, Rashi answers: “Since there is outside the city a place designated for impurity, to cast diseased stones and for a cemetery, it was necessary to say ‘outside the camp,’ meaning that which is outside the city, that the place should be pure.”

The holy Torah teaches us to be alert and careful. For even the Kohanim who were appointed over the service of the House of Hashem required a special warning from the Torah to burn the bull outside the camp specifically in a pure place, so that the yetzer hara would not come and attempt to confuse them that “outside the camp” could be a place of impurity. All the more so, we require additional caution that that old and foolish one should not confuse us.

And how can a person truly know whether he is doing the will of the Creator and not, chas v’shalom, the opposite? Concerning this, it is written in the seforim that a person must accustom himself before every action he performs to think and examine whether this is truly the will of Hashem, and if there is any doubt in the matter, he should consult with a great person. Only in this way can he be certain that he is truly fulfilling the will of his Creator.
Tiv HaTorah - Vayikra

our sake, to teach us that just as the teacher did not contain his teaching except through interruption and contemplation, so too all those who come after him must do the same.

Since these matters come to teach us, I have therefore elaborated in explaining the words of Rashi. For it is fitting to contemplate also the reality of the matters to which his words refer. Even though from the very language of Rashi we already understand his intention, his intention becomes even clearer when we contemplate the reality of the matter.

From the very statement of Rashi, you learn that even after a person has learned one chapter or even one single halacha, and the matters appear clear and understandable before him, even then he should not hurry immediately to the next chapter or the next halacha as long as he has not contemplated that chapter several times. For at a superficial glance, it sometimes seems to a person that he has already properly understood the matter he learned. But in truth he has not noticed several difficult details whose absence of understanding makes it impossible to define his knowledge as truly "understood." Therefore, he must examine it several times and contemplate whether there is indeed no flaw in his understanding, and only afterward can he proceed to the next halacha.

This is the simple meaning that emerges from Rashi's expression: "to give space between one section and the next." That is to say, between a complete section and another complete section,

or between one entire chapter and the next.

However, one must also know that not all souls are equal. Sometimes it is necessary to divide even one section into two parts: to learn half of it or part of it and contemplate it and afterward complete it. This was also the reality in the case before us, for before Moshe finished learning the entire section of the olah of cattle, and while he still lacked the law that it requires slaughter in the north, he was already given space to contemplate this section.

Perhaps this matter is understood and simple, yet it is worthy of being written, because many people come to despair when they see that even if they attempt to contemplate between one section and the next, certain details are lost from them, while their companions sitting beside them do succeed through the power of contemplation. It therefore appears to them that they have no hope, and that success is far from them.

However, the truth is that success in Torah does not depend upon the power of memory. Rather, a person must adapt the conditions necessary for acquiring Torah to his own individual abilities. If his memory does not serve him when he learns an entire chapter, he should suffice with learning part of it. If he does so, he will not lose even a drop of his learning. After he contemplates that portion several times, he will merit that all the details of that portion, with all of its particulars, will be well understood by him.

We also see from the reality of the

matter that besides the interruption between one section and the next, Moshe also needed to repeat in the following section most of the laws that were in the previous section. For most of the laws that are mentioned in the section of the olah of cattle are mentioned again in the section of the olah of sheep. This teaches that even after one adds to the earlier matters, he must again review them. Sometimes the later matters add a new light even to the earlier ones, and the understanding of them becomes clearer.

The very repetition of the earlier matters for the sake of remembering them, even without adding anything new, is itself also a cause that brings a person to greater clarity. As Chazal said (Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei, remez 937) regarding the posuk (Mishlei 5:19), עת ירווך בכל עת - "Let her breasts satisfy you at all times" — "Just as with a breast, whenever the infant touches it he finds milk in it, so too with the words of Torah: whenever a person contemplates them he finds taste in them." For each time one reviews what he has learned, the Torah continues to illuminate the eyes of a person and make him wiser, and he always finds in it wondrous points that he did not consider previously. There is no pleasure more beautiful than this.

May Hashem grant that we merit to always contemplate His Torah and review it, and through this may He illuminate our eyes to understand and comprehend it more and more.

‘ואין אתה בן חורין להיבטל ממנה’

‘And you are not free to desist from it’

Purim 5786, a time of war, with reduced public transportation lines and demand many times greater than the supply... I set out with my three sons toward the station from Modi'in Illit to Yerushalayim in order to celebrate Purim of Yerushalayim with the extended family. On the way, a friend met me and informed me that there was an inhuman crush of people crowding onto the doors of every bus that departed, and he concluded: "If you are someone with elbows and you have the strength to fight and push your way in, then try. But I see that you are with children and this is not suitable, so it is better for you to return home!!!" I thanked him for the update and continued toward the station.

I prepared the children mentally for what was to come, and this is what I said to them: "We will make hishtadlus, meaning we will walk calmly to the bus stop. If Hashem arranges for us to get on calmly without pushing any Jew, then we will travel to Yerushalayim to grandfather and the uncles. But if it is truly a situation of pushing and

elbows, we will return back with a smile!!!"

The children were afraid of being disappointed and began to say chapters of Tehillim rapidly, pleading before the Creator of the world that we should merit to reach Yerushalayim without pushing and calmly. I was quite close to the crowded station when a friend stopped me to say hello. I saw him standing ליד a minibus. When I asked him where he was traveling, he answered, "Yerushalayim." I asked if there was room, and he replied that everything was completely full. I thanked him and came to continue to the station, but then the wife of that friend said to him from within the minibus that he should check, because some had not yet arrived and perhaps there were places. He made phone calls, and it became clear that there were four available seats from those who had not managed to arrive. Exactly the number of places that we needed. They traveled to Yerushalayim right near the house of the uncle and the grandfather, and for us it was an express ride!!!

The children summarized the lesson: "A Jew must make an effort!!!"

סיב ההשגרה

In the holy work Tiferes Shlomo, a profound and awe-inspiring principle is derived from this pasuk regarding the foundation of the power of the speech. These are his holy words:

“When a man brings from among you—that is, a person who walks along his way and feels no closeness to Hakadosh Baruch Hu—should take proof from the animal, which becomes consecrated for offering solely through the speech of man, when he says: ‘This shall be a burnt-offering.’ It becomes most holy only through his utterance, through the mere breath of his mouth. And even though the animal itself has not changed at all and remains exactly as it was before.

“Yet the speech uttered by man is most holy, and it is that speech which takes effect upon the animal and sanctifies it. From here, a person should perceive the immense sanctity that resides within himself—and how much more so the speech of Torah and tefillah before Baruch Hu.

“This is the meaning of, When a man brings from among you —when he wishes to draw close to Hashem, from the animal, he may understand on his own how sanctity takes effect through the utterance of the mouth. And thereby, you shall bring your offering, for it suffices that he has the spirit of Hashem within him, so that he becomes a dwelling place for Him.”

From his holy words we learn the unique, inherent power contained in the utterance of a Jewish man—to take a coarse, lowly, physical animal and transform it instantaneously, through speech alone, from one extreme to the other, elevating it to the loftiest level of most holy offerings.

For this reason, it is established that although offerings are accepted from gentiles (Chullin 13a), they do not possess the power to confer the sanctity of an offering upon the animal itself. Their speech is effective only with respect to monetary law, such that by declaring it for Heaven it is removed from their ownership, as though handed over to a private individual. However, when the offering is brought to the Temple Mount, a kohen must sanctify it verbally, thereby extending the halachic sanctity of the offering—since with respect to the actual sanctification, the gentile has no power to effect consecration.

This is the reason for this halachah: the power vested in speech to transform a coarse animal into most holy is granted solely into the hands of holy people of Yisrael, and not to gentiles at all. Thus the Torah opens Sefer Vayikra with the words: Speak to Bnei Yisrael... when a man from among you brings—for this is among the unique endowments of the Chosen Nation.

So too ruled Rabbeinu Yonah zt”l in Shaarei Teshuvah (Shaar 3:229), that the mouth of a Jewish man is holy with the sanctity of a sacred vessel—see there carefully, and also in the introduction to Shev Shema’sa.

From here we learn how greatly we must value and cherish the power of the speech of a Jewish man, which effects wonders in both the

טיב המעשיות

The Power of the Speech

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה', מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן העזאן, תקריבו את קרבנכם (א, ב).

When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem— you shall bring your offering from animals, from cattle or from sheep (1:2).

physical and spiritual realms—for good and, chas veshalom, otherwise. May we merit that our speech be only for good, for Hashem and for Yisrael, Amen.

It is told of one of the tzaddikim that on one occasion a tape-recording device was placed before him, and they played for him a short segment of a derashah that he himself had delivered publicly.

The righteous rav was deeply impressed to hear his own voice and words emerging and rising from within the device. But after listening to only a brief portion, he suddenly collapsed and fainted on the spot. Great alarm ensued; the devoted attendants hurried to him at once and revived him with cold water, until his spirit returned.

After he recovered and regained his strength, they asked him what had so suddenly shaken him so profoundly. The tzaddik explained that he had been utterly shaken upon witnessing a tangible demonstration of how every single word that a person utters is preserved and can be heard again—and how far the power of the speech of a Jewish person truly reaches.

And indeed we have learned (Avos 2:1), דע מה לעילך ממה, עין רואה ואוזן שומעת - “Know what is above you: a seeing eye and a hearing ear.” Here in this world, a person can object to having his words recorded, and can choose what he wishes to have recorded and what not. Likewise, with photographs—one can object to certain poses in which he does not wish to be photographed.

But “above you”—at every moment, quite literally—there is “a seeing eye and a hearing ear.” There, above, the recording devices and cameras operate incessantly, whether one wishes it or not. Every word is captured and every movement is recorded, and “all your deeds are written in a book.”

Indeed, after one hundred and twenty years, immediately upon a person’s passing, he sees before his eyes—as though in a living “presentation”—all the days of his life upon this earth: every action and every deed, all his words and all his thoughts, small matters and great alike. As stated in the opening perek of Ta’anis (11a):

“When a person departs from this world, all his deeds are specified before him, and they say to him: ‘On such-and-such a day, in such-and-such a place, you did this and that,’ and he says, ‘Yes.’ They then say to him, ‘Sign,’ and he signs, as it is stated (לוי 37:7), יָדוֹ בְּכָל אֲדָמָה יִתְּמוּם - By the hand of every man He seals. And not only that, but he justifies the judgment upon himself and

says to them, ‘You judged me correctly,’ in fulfillment of the pasuk (Tehillim 51:6), לָמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרְךָ - That You may be justified when You speak.”

[As is well known from what many people have related who experienced what is termed “clinical death,” as mentioned in the Gemara (Pesachim 50a, cf. Rashi), “He weakened and fainted, expired and his spirit departed.” They suddenly saw all the days of their lives laid out before them in precise detail, including everything they thought and felt in every action.]

My revered father, the gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Levi HaKohen zt”l, once said in a derashah delivered on Shabbos Shuvah in the Torah Veyir’ah beis midrash here in the Holy City of Jerusalem, in reference to what Chazal expounded in the opening perakim of Chagigah (12b) and Avodah Zarah (3a): “Rabbi Levi said, ‘Whoever interrupts words of Torah and engages in idle conversation is fed glowing coals of broom wood,’ as it states (לוי 30:4), לַחֲטָיִם מְלוּחַ עֲלֵי שִׁיחַ וְשֹׂרֶשׁ רְתִמִּים - Those who pluck saltwort among shrubs, whose food is the root of broom.”

So too is this ruled as halachah in Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Yoreh De’ah, Hilchos Talmud Torah, 4:11): “It is forbidden to engage in idle conversation in a beis midrash just as it is forbidden in a beis knesses. Even one who sneezes may not be told, “You should be healthy” in a beis midrash, even when not at the time of study. Needless to say, during study the punishment is severe, as Chazal said: “He is fed glowing coals of broom wood.”

He explained that from the depth of this passage of the Gemara we may learn and understand that it does not refer to being fed those broom wood coals while reclining at a banquet in the palace of Gan Eden. There, certainly, no such coals are served; rather, “the righteous sit with their crowns upon their heads and delight in the radiance of the Shechinah.” As expressed in the piyut Akdamus, וּמִתְפַּנְּקִין וְרוּוֹ בְּכִסֵּי רְיִיתָא, וְרִייוֹהוּן דְּמֵי לְשִׁבְעָא - “They delight and are sated from cups of abundance, and their satisfaction resembles joyous fulfillment.”

Rather, from that “meal” of glowing coals we may understand that these individuals are not seated in Gan Eden at all, but that their place is deep within Gehinnom, and it is there that they are fed the glowing coals of broom wood.

(So too it is stated explicitly in the Gemara (Arachin 15b) “Glowing coals of broom wood—this is Gehinnom.” See the discussion there and the commentaries on the spot.)

Several months after that sermon, the great gaon Rav Mendel Atik zt”l encountered me and testified that he had been profoundly stirred by that Shabbos Shuvah derashah. He said that the discourse of your father, Rav Levi, with his remarkable explanation of the statement of Rabbi Levi in the Gemara, still echoes in his ears and prevents him from speaking anything during his Torah study.

It is fitting to add here the words of Maran the Chafetz Chaim zt”l, in his work Zechor LeMiriam (chapter 9), where he writes as follows:

“One must be careful during his study that his learning not be fragmented and intermixed with idle talk, for aside from transgressing the statement of Chazal—“Whoever interrupts words of Torah and engages in idle conversation is fed glowing coals of broom wood”—he will then be exceedingly ashamed of his deeds.

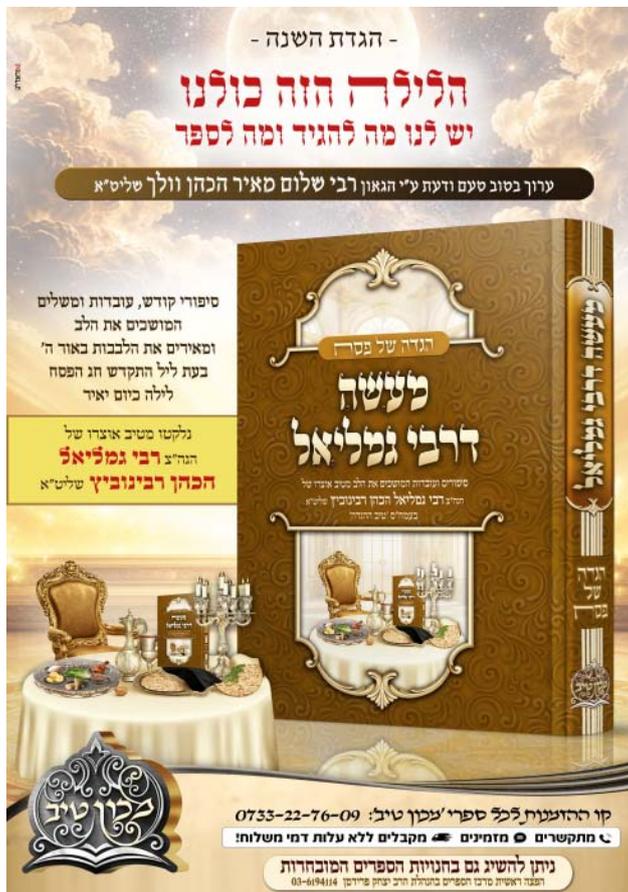
“For example, if someone were to purchase a maseches of Gemara printed on fine paper with elegant lettering, yet throughout the subject matter many idle stories were interspersed in numerous places, he would certainly refrain from buying it.

“Likewise, when the angel reads before him the masechta he studied in the Heavenly court, together with the idle stories interwoven within it, then aside from the transgression itself, they will regard him as a fool who degraded his masechta—which was more precious than gold and fine gold and was meant to be a sign of honor and glory—and he rendered it like an earthen vessel of no worth. This applies not only to the study of Torah and Mishnah, but likewise when one studies any maseches: he must ensure that it be clear and pure, without any improper admixture.

“Indeed, it is confirmed in many places in the words of Chazal that a person’s soul testifies against him at the time of judgment. That is because all of a person’s deeds and all of his words become fixed within his soul, engraved into its memory. There is a person whose soul contains all six orders of Mishnah and the entire Shas, and there is another who gathered within his memory all the vanities and refuse of life—and all of it is preserved to be recalled at the time of judgment. As Chazal stated (Chagigah 5b) on the pasuk (Amos 4:13) וַיְגַדֵּי לְאָדָם מַה שָׁוּ, - And He tells a man what his speech is — even a light conversation is recounted to a person at his time of judgment.

“Concerning this matter, Chazal alluded to the pasuk (Michah 7:5), מְשַׁכְּבֵת חֵיקֶךָ שָׁמֵר פִּתְחֵי, פִּיךָ - From she who lies in your bosom [that is, your soul], guard the openings of your mouth, for it is like the device called a gramophone: if one initially places within it pleasant melodies, it emits a beautiful and pleasing sound and all rejoice in it; but if one places within it sounds of wailing and crying, all weep with it. This is precisely the case with the human mind. Therefore, the pasuk alludes to this as well (Tehillim 50:21), אֲכַבְּיָךְ וְאֶעֱרָכָה לְעֵינֶיךָ, I will reprove you and set it before your eyes, as stated in the Midrash, that all of one’s deeds are illuminated before him.

“How greatly must a person tremble when he remembers that all his actions and all his words, from the moment he came of age—whether holy words of Torah and mitzvos and words of blessing and the like, or any form of forbidden speech, even the lightest conversation—all are engraved in his mind, preserved in his memory, and all await his arrival: some to grant reward, like a son who awaits his honored father with joy, and others to exact retribution from him. Fortunate is the person who hastens to repent before he is summoned to give an accounting.”



How far does the power of the speech of a Jewish person reach—the power of his prayer and his Torah? All the more so the speech of children who study Torah, by whose breath the world endures (Shabbos 119b), and even the utterances of a very young child! This can be learned from a wondrous account related in the holy Zohar in Parashas Balak, which teaches us the immense power of the simple, innocent words of a small child—a yinuka who speaks words of supplication and entreaty flowing from a pure heart, and who effects lofty wonders throughout the entire Heavenly retinue, even to the point of resurrection of the dead.

These are the words of the holy Zohar (3:204a-206a) translated into English.

Rabbi Elazar said: “Friends, let us go and perform an act of kindness with Rabbi Yosi of Peki’in, who has passed away, and there is no one to attend to him, and he is close to us.” The companions turned aside from the road and made their way to Peki’in. When they arrived there, all the people of the city came out to greet them, and Rabbi Elazar and the companions entered the house of Rabbi Yosi.

Rabbi Yosi had a young son, and he would not allow anyone to approach his father’s bed after his passing. Only he himself stood there alone, crying over him—his mouth pressed to his father’s mouth.

The child opened his mouth and said: “Master of the Universe, it is written in the Torah (Devarim 22:6,7) כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לְפִנְיֶךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ שְׁלַח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָאֵם וְאֶת הַבְּנִים - If a bird’s nest chances before you... you shall surely send away the mother, and the young you may take for yourself. The child sobbed and wept and said: “Ribbono Shel Olam, fulfill this mitzvah that is written in Your Torah! We are two children—I and my little sister. You should have taken us and thereby fulfilled what is written in the Torah. And if You

will say that the Torah speaks of a ‘mother’ and not a ‘father’—he is everything for us, both father and mother! For our mother has already died, as You took her from upon the children; and now our father, who protected us, You have taken from the children as well. Where, then, is the justice of the Torah?”

Rabbi Elazar and the companions wept at the sound of the child’s crying. A pillar of fire descended from Heaven and separated between the assembled crowd and the child. Rabbi Elazar said: “Either Hakadosh Baruch Hu, wishes to perform a miracle here, or He wishes that no one should involve himself with Rabbi Yosi. But the words and tears of this child—I cannot bear them.”

As they sat there, they heard a voice proclaiming: “Fortunate are you, Rabbi Yosi, for the words of this small child and his tears have ascended before the Throne of Glory, and your judgment has been adjudicated. Hakadosh Baruch Hu, designated for the Angel of Death thirteen other people in your place, and He has added twenty-two years to your life, so that you may teach Torah to this perfect and beloved child before Hakadosh Baruch Hu.”

Rabbi Elazar and the companions rose and allowed no one to remain inside the house. Immediately the pillar of fire ascended, and Rabbi Yosi opened his eyes—while the child

was still clinging, mouth to mouth, to his father.

Rabbi Elazar said: “Fortunate is our portion, for we have seen the resurrection of the dead with our own eyes!” They approached him, and the child was asleep, as one who had expired from the world. They said: “Fortunate are you, Rabbi Yosi, and blessed is Hashem, who performed a miracle for you through the sobbing and crying of your son.” They took the child, kissed him, and wept together with him from overwhelming joy. They then brought him to another house and did not inform him immediately, but only later.

They remained for three days and renewed many teachings of Torah with Rabbi Yosi. Rabbi Yosi said that the three hundred and sixty-five tears that his son shed were all reckoned before Hakadosh Baruch Hu; and at the moment when his son began with the pasuk, If a bird’s nest chances before you, three hundred thousand benches in the Heavenly academy trembled. All of them stood before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and pleaded mercy on his behalf, offering their surety for him. Hakadosh Baruch Hu, was filled with compassion toward him and commanded the Angel of Death to return only after twenty-two years. And because you are true righteous ones, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, performed a miracle before your eyes.

Rabbi Elazar asked Rabbi Yosi: “How old is the child?” He said to them: “Do not ask this—for he is not yet five years old.” Rabbi Elazar said to him: “Chas veshalom—I look upon him with a kind eye.”

This teaches the immense power of the speech of a Jew—and all the more so that of children who study Torah, and especially their prayers, cries, and tears. Just as they annulled the decree of Haman in his time, so too did this small child, only five years old, annul the decree that was leveled on his father and [who subsequently] merited the resurrection of the dead.

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