

Kehillah #45



THE PERTINENT PARASHA

Divine Promises, Human Fulfillment

Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer | Rav of Kehillat Ohr Chadash, Ramot, Jerusalem

Parashas Chayei Sarah sees the beginning of the realization of Hashem's promises to Avraham Avinu. On the one hand, the promise of the land. Avraham Avinu lived upon the promised land, but before his acquisition of land from Ephron he had no concrete ownership over it. After purchasing a family burial plot, the fulfillment of the promise began to take root. It started at Chevron.

On the other hand, the promise of the nation. Avraham had already begotten children - Yishmael, and, more significantly, Yitzchak, in whom the promise would be fulfilled. However, only when Yitzchak himself is wed and begets offspring does Avraham realize his continuity in the full sense.

Grandchildren, the *Gemara* teaches, are like children. They are "children extended," the first step outside of the nuclear family and toward the realization of a nation.

It is striking that both realizations, of

land and nation, did not come easily. Avraham needed to work hard for both. In the case of the land, it took serious negotiation skills to ensure the transfer of land from Ephron, who preferred to gift the land (and refrain from a full transfer), to Avraham's property. And in the case of grandchildren, Avraham, by means of his servant Eliezer, needed to go to great lengths to ensure Yitzchak's marriage to Rikva.

This seems difficult. Hashem gave Avraham two promises, the nation and the land. Shouldn't Hashem also ensure the fulfillment of the promises? Why is it that Avraham needed to work so hard to achieve the first realizations of both?

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THE PERTINENT PARASHA



The answer to this unveils the depth of partnership between Hashem and humanity – a partnership that reaches its full expression with the Jewish people, the children of Avraham. The Midrash teaches how the Roman governor Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva, “Which are better, things made by the Almighty or things made by flesh and blood?” The expected answer was that Hashem’s works are better, and the governor’s intention was to attack the act of Bris Milah. But Rabbi Akiva replied, “Things made by flesh and blood are better!”

Rabbi Akiva brought him wheat and cakes and said to him, “These are made by the Almighty and these are made by man. Aren’t these [cakes] better than the wheat?”

At the end of the labor of creation, Hashem saw the entire world, “and behold, it was very good.” The world is very good, but it requires human input to reveal the goodness. So, too, is the case with Avraham, who was given the covenant of Bris Milah – the covenant of revealing hidden light.

Hashem promises, the promise of nation and land. But it is up to us, beginning with Avraham himself, to ensure the fulfillment. It is incredible, but true. Hashem leaves it to us to fulfill His own promises.

No time can better represent this equation than wartime. Hashem promised us the land. And yet, like Yehoshua who first conquered the land, we must fight for it against an evil enemy. We fight for the Jewish nation. And we fight for Hashem, who promised us the land.

The Rambam writes (*Milchamos* Chap. 7): “Anyone who fights with a complete entire heart and without fear, with the pure intention of sanctifying Hashem’s Name, can be assured that he will find no harm, nor will evil overtake him. He will be granted a proper family in Israel and gather merit for himself and his children forever.”

The war we fight is for the sanctification of His Name. No less. We are all a part of it. Hashem promised, and it’s up to us – with His help – to fulfill.



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Hashkafically Speaking

The Heart of a Gadol

Rabbi Yaacov Haber – Rav of Kehillas Shivtei Yeshurun, Ramat Beit Shemesh

When I was a young *yeshiva bachur* I was impressed with intelligence. I looked at the *gedolim* and was in awe of their intellect. Now, as I get older I'm less impressed with intellect and much more taken by their kindness. People tell me stories about how much this rav knows and what kind of miracles their Rebbe can perform. It is interesting, but when I hear a story about a Rebbe that went out of his way to help a fellow Jew in spite of his difficult schedule and often ill health, that is where I'm dazzled; that's where I'm sending my *kvitlach*.

Avraham was a great man by any standard. He was a leader, a warrior, a hero, a prophet, and the progenitor of the greatest people ever to appear on the face of the earth. The things he thought about were esoteric, mystical, and holy. But suddenly he had to get involved in a common area of life. He had to marry off his son. He had to think about compatibility, religiosity, culture, and what would make his son happy.

He sent his servant Eliezer traveling to look for a mate. He

blessed him and promised him that G-d would perform miracles to help him. Eliezer arrived at Aram Naharayim and spoke to G-d. "I will find a wife for Yitzchak by the well," he said. Sure enough, Eliezer stood by the well, and behold, a beautiful young lady from exactly the right family was standing by the well. Wild! Her charm poured out, and Eliezer immediately developed a wonderful feeling about her and a miracle happened: instead of Rivka raising the barrel of water from the well, the water automatically rises to her. *Bashert!* Eliezer hit the jackpot. Here was the *kalla* exactly as G-d said, exactly where Eliezer stipulated, exactly as Avraham wanted, and exactly as was right for Yitzchak. She was right, she was beautiful, and a miracle occurred which showed that Rivka with her spirituality had mastery over the physical, so she was holy too...what else is there?

The answer is *chesed*. Kindness and good-heartedness. Eliezer needed to find out if Rivka was a *baalas chesed*. She may have been beautiful and had the right *yichus* (lineage); she may have been holy





Hashkafically Speaking



and may even have performed miracles, but that doesn't mean that she had a good heart. It doesn't even mean that she was a mensch.

A good heart is able to bond with another good heart to create a home for the Shechina.

There are so many factors that go into a good relationship. There are so many variables that have to be right. The scary part is that as we go through life, many if not all of those variables change. None of us look the same as we looked twenty years ago. Most of us don't live in the same place that we used to live; most of us are not in the same physical or financial situation. So when it comes to a relationship, what can we rely on?

The answer is a good heart. If we can develop a *lev tov*, if we marry someone with a good heart, it will take us through the most trying circumstances. Through health and illness, wealth and poverty, holy

times and not so holy times – you can rely on a good heart.

Two of my favorite *gedolim* of the last generation met. The Rogatchover Gaon was a young man and he traveled to Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin. They discussed topic after topic in the Talmud on a level impossible to imagine. Before the Rogatchover left, Reb Tzadok told him, "You are a great genius, perhaps the greatest in the upcoming generation. I too was considered a prodigy but I eventually learned that scholastic abilities are wonderful but real greatness lies in a *lev tov*." The Rogatchover reported that that statement changed his life.

What is a good heart?

A good heart sees the good in others.

A good heart smiles easily.

A good heart automatically opens up when someone stretches out their hand. A good heart is able to bond with another good heart to create a home for the *Shechina*.

Hashem put Avraham through so many tests but at the end defined his greatness with one sentence: "I found his heart trustworthy."



Getting to Yes

Rabbi Asher Meir | Torah and Policy Researcher

Our *parasha* is one of hard-nosed negotiations. The first chapter details Avraham's negotiations with Efron over the *Me'aras Hamachpela*; the second details the devoted efforts of Avraham's servant (Rashi informs us that this is Eliezer) to find a wife for Yitzchak, and subsequently to obtain the consent of Rivka and her family to this match.

Jewish law upholds a very high standard for full disclosure in commerce regarding the actual terms of a sale: the nature of the merchandise and the price being paid. Not only is it forbidden to intentionally mislead the other side regarding any deficiency in the merchandise; it is necessary to actively correct any reasonable misunderstanding (*Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 228:6*).

However, your willingness to close a deal is somewhat different. It is hardly prudent to disclose it in a bargaining situation. If the buyer discloses how much he is willing to pay, the seller is unlikely to agree to settle for less! So we find in many places that halacha sanctions lack of transparency in bargaining regarding one's intentions, or about facts that bear on intentions.

For instance, the Gemara in *Nedarim* (20b-21a) sanctions the seller implying that he will never settle for less than four, while the buyer insists he will never give more than two, when in fact both are willing to settle for three.

Another example: Shlomo Hamelech notes that according to human nature, "The buyer says, It's no good, it's no good! – and then goes off and boasts about the purchase" (*Mishlei 20:14*). As an application of this insight, we find in several responsa that subjectively disparaging the seller's merchandise is an accepted tactic to drive down the price (Maharshdam, *Choshen Mishpat 243; Lev David 86*).

Returning to our *parasha*, the *Zohar* (1:129a) explains that Avraham wanted the *Me'aras Hamachpela* specifically, because he knew of its unique spiritual qualities, particularly those in the surrounding field. However, we see in the Torah that he gives Efron the impression that he is interested only in a burial ground, that there is nothing special about this particular location, and that the field is really just an afterthought and not something of special importance to him.





MEKOM AVODA

Rav Yaakov Fish, in his work *Titen Emes LeYaakov* (*siman* 121, p. 342), relates that once Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld was looking for a copy of tractate *Eiruv*, but in order not to harm his bargaining position with the bookseller, he first inquired about a different tractate. There is no untruth uttered, and it is legitimate to hide from the other side how much you value the deal.

Avraham gives Efron the impression that he is interested only in a burial ground and that the surrounding field is really just an afterthought and not something of special importance to him.

We find this same pattern in Eliezer's negotiations, via the notable differences between the Torah's description of events and Eliezer's account to Lavan and Besuel. The Abarbanel understands that Avraham tells Eliezer to find a bride from his homeland (*Bereishis* 24:4), but Eliezer states that he insisted further on finding a bride from his family (*Bereishis* 24:38). Eliezer is content to give the ornaments to Rivka before ensuring that she is Avraham's relative (24:22-23),

but he tells the family that he checked her pedigree first (24:47). Avraham places the emphasis on the decision of the bride (24:8), but Eliezer says Avraham emphasized the agreement of the family (24:41).

Eliezer's conduct with Lavan is more daring than that of Avraham with Efron, because he is making affirmative factual statements which contradict verifiable events. But note that the facts relate only to how much Avraham's family esteems Rivka and Lavan; they don't relate in any way to the substance of the deal (such as the *kesuba*). It is permissible and polite to show particular esteem when you want someone to agree to a marriage, and from Eliezer's example it seems this extends to making factual statements whose only real significance is their expression of such esteem.

In cases like this where some exaggeration is common and serves a real purpose, then if the other side really cares about the exact events, they should ask for a clarification. (Similar to what we find in the Mishna in *Kiddushin* 48b, that sometimes a misunderstanding cancels a deal only if a stipulation was made.)

The Alsheich points out a lesser-known change Eliezer makes. Eliezer anticipated that the young lady would draw water (*Bereishis*





MEKOM AVODA



24:13). But in fact, the Torah tells us that at first Rivka merely “filled her jug” – without drawing water (24:16). From this we see that the well water rose up to her – as Rashi points out in the next verse. However, Eliezer tells the family that in fact Rivka did draw water (24:45). The Alsheich explains that while Eliezer did want to show Hashem’s providential role in the *shidduch*, he didn’t want to exaggerate it, because it might have emboldened Lavan to make additional demands.

The miraculous nature of this *shidduch*, including the unique sign of the welling up of the water, bears an additional message. When Eliezer subtly changes the story,

he is not trying to take advantage of Lavan. On the contrary, he is trying to help him. The remarkable divine assistance he receives makes him sure that this match is ideal not only for Yitzchak and Avraham, but equally for Rivka and Lavan. Likewise, not only did Efron get a very good price, Rashi (23:10) points out that doing business with Avraham was a great honor for him.

This is a good model for negotiations: it is often necessary to be evasive in bargaining; however, ideally the objective should not be to take advantage of the other side, but to facilitate a final deal which will be in the best interests of both sides.



PARASHA AND PARNASSAH

Getting Out of the Way

Rabbi Tzvi Broker – Career Coach and Director of Pilzno Work Inspired

The Midrash on this week’s *parasha* (*Bereishis Rabba* 60:8) delves into why there is a seemingly unnecessary repetition of the story about how Eliezer met Rivka in Eliezer’s discourse to Lavan after the Torah just told us the story in all of its detail. Rabbi Acha learned from here that the ordinary conversation of the servants of the

patriarchs is more beloved before Hashem than the Torah of their sons, for the section dealing with Eliezer is repeated in the Torah, whereas many fundamentals of the Torah were given only through allusions.

The Sefas Emes (5632) provides an insight into the repetition





PARASHA AND PARNASSAH



that teaches us how to clear out our own blockages to success. Eliezer understood that the key to his successful mission wasn't his strategy or his own merit. It was clear to him that Avraham's wish for an appropriate wife for Yitzchak would be actualized. The only obstacles were his own ulterior motives for personal gain that would prevent him from being a pure conduit for fulfilling Avraham's will. Therefore, Eliezer repeated the whole story from start to finish as part of his own internal processing and self-assessment of his motives. As Rashi points out, Eliezer realized through his own narrative that he had subconsciously hoped that he would not find an appropriate match so that Avraham would consider his own daughter as an alternative marriage prospect for Yitzchak. As he became aware of this subconscious motive, he was able to realign his motivations with his mission of fulfilling Avraham's wish.

The Sefas Emes further explains that each Jew is a messenger of Hashem for actualizing Hashem's vision for the world. The key to one's success as Hashem's messenger is ensuring that our motives are aligned with Hashem's intentions. This is a relevant principle in the world of *parnassa*. We spend hours of our days working to earn a living, but the question is, What are our

true motivations for doing so? Ask yourself, Why am I involved in making efforts for *parnassa*? Then listen internally to what answer comes up for you. Is it because of the fear of not having your needs met? The desire to enjoy a materialistic lifestyle? In order to not be embarrassed about living beneath your community's standards? All these reasons why people work are understandable and quite common. Yet we each have a deeper "why we work" that we can tap into.

You want to be Hashem's messenger to provide for your family in the service of Hashem. Alternatively, you understand the important part of your own *tikkun* that is playing out through using your job or your unique talents to better Hashem's world.

The more that you align your actions with an elevated intention, the more you tap into being a messenger of Hashem. The key to success is making *parnassa* not about you. It's about getting yourself out of the way. Eliezer's repetition of the story teaches that we're never too busy to stop ourselves and reassess what our "why" is. Even in the middle of executing your plans, take a moment to ask yourself why you are doing what you are doing at work today in this phone call, investment made, or code programmed. By doing this, we unlock the keys to achieving success.



Taking Interest

Making *Heter Iska* Effective

Rabbi Shloimy Muller

Talmid of Rav Pinchas Vind *shlita*, founder of the Beis Horaah L'Inyanei Ribbis

We mentioned that most banks in Eretz Yisrael have an existing *heter iska*, which can often be seen hanging on the wall of the bank's waiting room. However, that's where the documentation ends. It is not documented in the customer's account or loan file that these transactions are subject to the *heter iska*. As one *posek* put it, when we take a mortgage, we sign on dozens and dozens of documents covering every remote possibility and delineating every aspect of the mortgage, yet we do not sign on or even mention the *heter iska* at all.

This leaves the bank in a position to theoretically be able to deny the validity and restrictions of the *heter iska* in regard to a specific loan. It's unclear if the courts will accept the fact that the bank has a *heter iska* hanging on the wall to nullify what is clearly written in the contract and signed by the client. And as we have learned, the *heter iska* is meant to be a fully binding legal contract, changing the very nature of the loan into an investment. If it can be legally ignored, then it accomplishes nothing.

Therefore, many leading *poskim* say that one should ideally request from the bank that it attach a *heter iska* to their customer's file, thus assuring that all activities in the account are subject to it. This can be done even after opening an account. Once a *heter iska* is attached to the file it can no longer be ignored, and therefore it accomplishes all that it is meant to do.

Likewise, when taking a mortgage, before signing one should ask for a signature from the bank confirming that this mortgage is subject to a *heter iska*. They will usually write on the cover page "subject to *heter iska*" and sign underneath. The banks are familiar with this request and will usually agree to it without making a fuss.

Following the steps above can ensure that one's financial dealings with the bank are *ribbis* free. *Chazal* have taught us that transgressing the prohibition of *ribbis* can ruin a person financially, and many people have experienced this firsthand. On the positive end, exercising vigilance to protect oneself from *ribbis* is an effective way to ensure success in business.



Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Herzog

Rabbi Dov Loketch – Rabbi of Agudas Yisrael Mogen Avraham, Detroit

Last week we discussed Rav Herzog's early years as chief rabbi. This week we'll describe his tireless efforts during World War II to open the gates of immigration in Palestine to save the Jews of Europe.

Despite his opposition to the violent reprisal acts against innocent Arabs, Rav Herzog passionately intervened with the British government on behalf of convicted Jewish prisoners and was able to save the lives of a number of convicts from execution. Unfortunately, however, his efforts on behalf of other convicts were unsuccessful.

In the spring of 1939, the British government issued the infamous White Paper, which called for the establishment of an independent Arab state, set severe restrictions on Jewish immigration to Eretz Yisrael, and prohibited land purchases there. As the danger facing European Jewry was increasing by the day, with Hitler mobilizing to implement his nefarious plan of exterminating the Jews, Britain effectively shut the doors of the Jews' ancestral homeland to those looking to escape Europe. The day after the paper's publication, Rav Herzog delivered a speech at the Yeshurun Synagogue in Jerusalem, stating that the White Paper "shook the foundations of the land to its very roots," and accused Great Britain of "misconstruing their historical role and betraying the House of Israel." He declared, "The White Paper has

turned into a black stain. I fear that the black will yet turn to red."

Rav Herzog proceeded to tear his copy of the White Paper to shreds, as a dramatic demonstration of his rejection of its moral legitimacy.

"A Plea and a Warning"

Just several months later, on September 1, World War II began with German's merciless invasion of Poland. In October, Rav Herzog petitioned a number of British government officials to allow the yeshiva students in Poland and Lithuania to immigrate to Palestine. His pleas were rejected. Rav Herzog's fear that the White Paper would turn to red tragically proved correct, as the High Commissioner of the British Mandate of Palestine, Harold McMichael, refused Rav Herzog's requests, pointing to the White Paper as the final word on British policy vis-à-vis Jewish immigration to Palestine.

At a meeting of the National Committee, the governing body of the Jews of Palestine, Rav Herzog invoked the image of the Chanukah miracle, proclaiming, "To whatever extent possible, we must pour the oil





BIOGRAPHY & LEGACY

into the Menorah. Only when we do all that we can will the miracle occur.”



Rav Herzog expended tireless efforts, traveling to London in early 1940. In the end, however, he managed to secure visas for only 50 of the nearly 2,000 yeshiva students he had sought to rescue. Significantly, he succeeded in persuading the Russian ambassador to England to allow Mir Yeshiva students and others to escape Europe to the Far East via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

In late 1940, as World War II raged, Rav Herzog spent seven months traveling through the United States and South Africa. Although the primary purpose

of the trip was to seek medical treatment which he required, he also hoped to raise large amounts of money for the rescue efforts and for assisting the impoverished refugees.

He met with numerous figures, including President Roosevelt, who invited him to the White House on April 29, 1941. Rav Herzog recited the *beracha* traditionally recited over seeing a king and told the president, “G-d’s covenant is present in America, and I am confident that it will be a stronghold of freedom and human liberty for many years to come.” He then proceeded to plead for help on behalf of his brethren in Europe.

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Head in the Sand

Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

Relationships Coach and author of *The Moderately Anxious Everybody*

And now we understand. Our whole lives we wondered how the Jews of Germany didn't leave. They were comfortable, we were told. Germany was civilized, they believed. How could they possibly envision how bad things were to get? Well, that's certainly true. How could they possibly preempt the horrors yet to unfold, back in good old 1938?

that I wasn't abandoning, that I'll be back shortly, I reflect on what I experienced.

A beautiful community, galvanizing its resources to do *chesed* for its Israeli brethren. So many lovely people asked me how I am. And they let me know how sorry they are for what is happening to us, over there. They meant it. And I appreciated it.

Some friends tell me they're packing their bags, but most are burying their concerns for themselves by busying themselves with concerns for us – far, far away, in Israel.

Yet something in me stirs. The triggering of a generational trauma. I hear the denial. I feel the cognitive dissonance. I'm not offended that the Jews outside Israel view this as our war and not their war. I'm not offended, but I'm worried. Yes, I say, it's a very difficult time in Israel. But I'm just as worried about you, in the Diaspora, and the rising antisemitism.

It's terribly tragic that so much of European Jewry didn't leave until they couldn't leave.

Returning from a long weekend outside of Israel, apologetically promising every airport attendant I saw that it was just for a short trip,

My retort is not well received. We're okay over here, they reassure me, or perhaps themselves. Everything is normal, they say. Not all, of course. Some friends tell me they are packing their bags, but most are burying their concerns for themselves by busying themselves





with concerns for us – far, far away, in Israel.



And now I understand the Jews of Germany. Comfortable, established, integrated, accepted... A threat of extinction? A barbaric annihilation? Surely not!

It's a repeat of a golden age, like the many we've had over the centuries. They always end in tears, yet we never seem to learn. Had the German Jews lived 70 years after a holocaust, you'd imagine they might be less naive. But apparently, even that's not enough to get us to open our eyes today.

The readers here are all here already. *Baruch Hashem*, the decision and the move are behind us. But most of us have friends and family who are not here in Israel. And as far as I can see, things are bad, and the momentum of deterioration is rapid. Every antisemitic incident gives tacit permission and encouragement for the next one.

Telling people to leave is futile. Those who might want to hear it are packing their bags. Those who don't want to, won't.

But we can do something and I think we have an obligation to do something. We can request of our loved ones outside of Israel to establish a red line. They need

to determine the red line before it happens. And the agreement needs to be that if the red line is crossed, it's time to go. Each family can have its own red line. Uprooting a family is a huge deal. People really need to commit on their own volition. And hopefully things will stay stable enough so everyone does come, but not because they were forced to come.

The agreement needs to be that if the red line is crossed, it's time to go.

We in Israel have a lot going on. On that list is, believe it or not, our responsibility to our Diaspora brethren. We have an advantage over them. We already left. So we're not blinded by the same comforts and excuses. Those who can see have an obligation to help the blind. By encouraging the narrative of red lines, we can help Jewry shift out of its stupor.

For what bigger *chesed* for a blind man is there than gently helping him to see?



Panim Chadashos – New Faces at a Sheva Brachos

Josh and Tammy Kruger

The Story

Eitan ran down the hall of his apartment building and knocked furiously on the neighbor's door.

"Hi Eitan," said Mrs. Mernick, recognizing her neighbor. "You've certainly been rushing around a lot. Please tell me how can I help you?"

Eitan tried to catch his breath. "I'm trying to find someone who's available to come to our home now. We're making a *sheva brachos* for my former babysitter Maayan. The 'new guest' just called that he's not feeling well and won't be able to make it tonight."

"Oh, of course. I remember Maayan. What a nice person. Did you go to her wedding?" asked Mrs. Mernick.

Eitan sighed, "No, I couldn't go to the wedding because I had a school event the same night that I couldn't miss. I was so disappointed, but then I found out that my family was making a *sheva brachos* meal tonight. Now I'm worried that we won't be able to make the *sheva brachos* properly. Can you and your husband come over to be the

panim chadashos?"

"I'm so sorry, but Mr. Mernick is at work until late tonight. And I have to stay home with the children who are already asleep," she answered. "Hmmm, let's think who else in this building would be able to help you. The Steins are out of town. The Nickersons are visiting their daughter in college. The Posners are at a school meeting for their children. My goodness, Eitan. I cannot think of anyone else!"

"Thank you anyway, Mrs. Mernick," said Eitan. Disappointed, he slowly walked back down the hall. He missed the wedding and hadn't been able to help his parents prepare very much for the *sheva brachos*. Now he felt frustrated that he wasn't even able to help at the only task he had been given.

He slowly opened the door to his family's apartment. "Sorry, but no one can come over to help make the *sheva brachos*." As he looked up, he was shocked to see everyone looking with beaming smiles at him.





PARASHA HALACHA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Discussion

Q: What is the connection between our story and the *parasha*?

A: In our *parasha*, Eliezer brings Rivka from the land of Charan to marry Yitzchak. As Rivka sets off on her journey, her family gives her a blessing (*Bereshis* 24:61). From this story we learn that it is important to give *brachos* to a *chosson* and *kallah* at the time of their wedding. This is the basis of the *sheva brachos* ceremony (*Maseches Kallah*, Chap. 1). During the first seven days of a couple's marriage, it is traditional to make a special meal each day during which they are blessed by their family and friends.

Q: In order to recite the *sheva brachos*, there are two important requirements. What are they?

A: Firstly, it is necessary that there be a minyan (10 adult men). Secondly, someone must be present who was not present at the wedding meal (*Shulchan Aruch, Even Haezer* 62:7). This person is the 'new face', the *panim chadashos* in Hebrew.

Q: Why is it necessary to have *panim chadashos* at the *sheva brachos*?

A: The blessings can only be

recited when there is a special happiness. It gives a *chosson* and *kallah* great happiness to celebrate their wedding with others, so it is certainly appropriate to recite the *sheva brachos* at the wedding. During the following week, if they are able to celebrate with someone new then they experience further joy, and the *sheva brachos* can be recited again. Based on this reasoning, it obviously makes sense that the *panim chadashos* should ideally be a person that has a special connection with the *chosson* and *kallah*, so that their added presence is definitely appreciated (*Beis Shmuel* 62:10).

Q: Why is everyone smiling at Eitan?

A: Many people assume that since a minyan is required to say the *sheva brachos*, the *panim chadashos* also has to be an adult man. However, this is not the case. The accepted opinion is that a woman or even a child can serve as the *panim chadashos* (*Chasam Sofer, Kesubos* 7b, s.v. *bemakheilos*; *Yismach Lev*, No. 339). In our story, Eitan has a special connection with the *kallah*. His presence brings joy to the dinner and fulfills the requirement to recite the *sheva brachos*.





PARASHA HALACHA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Back to Our Story

While Eitan was hunting the apartment building for a guest, his father hunted through his *sefarim*.

"It seems it was *beshert* that Eitan was not able to attend the wedding after all!" he exclaimed.

By the time Eitan returned without his 'guest of honor,' everyone understood that he was the perfect guest of honor.

"Who did you find to be the *panim chadashos*?" he asked.

"I'll give you a hint!" said Maayan with a smile. "This person is very special to us but wasn't at the wedding. And I used to read him a story

and help brush his teeth whenever I'd come to this apartment to babysit!"

Eitan felt very special that he was needed to make the *sheva brachos* complete. The family and friends at the celebration congratulated him on his extra efforts that evening. Later on, when most of the guests had already left, Maayan approached Eitan. "Thanks for your help! You were a really special *panim chadashos* for us. By the way, I'm gonna read a book to your little sister on the couch now before your mom puts her to sleep. Any chance you'll join us? For old time's sake?"

"Sure!" smiled Eitan. "But this time I'm brushing my teeth by myself."



Written in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer, le'ilui nishmas Frumit bat Yosef.

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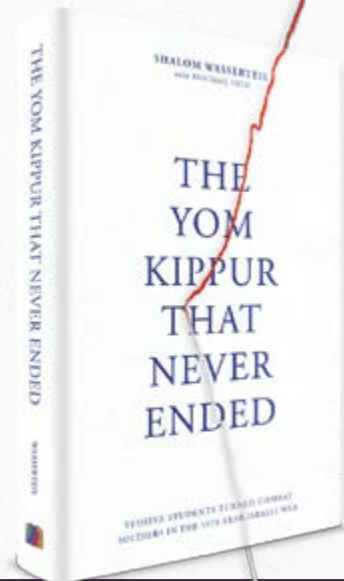
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