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ו' שבט תש"ע

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ראשי הישיבה

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Dvar Torah - The Awesome Power of Chesed by Rabbi Chaim Glazer



In the *Shma* we recite twice daily, we are commanded, "ואהבת את ד' אלוקר" - *Love Hashem, your G-d.*" One effective way to bring one's self to fulfill this command is to focus on all the good that *Hashem* bestows upon us. When we contemplate and realize all *Hashem* does for us, it naturally engenders feelings of love and appreciation. One might think that only very meaningful and significant benefits would have the effect of fostering these emotions, but we see from this week's *Parsha* that it isn't so.

As *Bnei Yisroel* are on the verge of leaving Egypt, Moshe commands them to "*Remember this day.*" Surely, a miracle such as this deserves to be remembered forever. However, in the next verse, Moshe remarks, "Today you are leaving in the Spring," *Rashi* explains that Moshe was asking *Bnei Yisroel* to focus on the kindness *Hashem* was bestowing upon them by redeeming them a time when the weather was good. In the summer, it is quite hot in Egypt, and in the winter, it tends to rain.

This is puzzling. If, for example, the President would, after 30 years in prison, pardon a prisoner with a life

sentence and no chance of parole, the prisoner would be so thankful and full of joy! The emotional elation he would feel upon walking through the prison gate would scarcely be tempered by inclement weather. *Bnei Yisroel* were receiving the ultimate pardon after 210 years of subjugation. Their sentence was one of unspeakable horrors, back-breaking slavery and death. What additional gratitude could *Bnei Yisroel* possibly feel to *Hashem*?

We must say that *Bnei Yisroel*, by focusing on the relatively smaller kindness, could come to feel a level of appreciation for *Hashem's chesed* that could not be attained by contemplating the larger *chesed* alone. There is seemingly no limit to the amount of love and appreciation one can feel, and for every additional benefit one receives, he has the ability to increase his feelings of gratitude toward the giver.

We can foster a greater relationship with *Hashem*, by focusing on all He does for us, great and small. Let us realize as well that we can improve our relationships with those around us by reflecting on the kindness we receive from them. Even small acts of kindness done for another have the ability to engender warm feelings of gratitude.

Dvar Halacha – תפילת הדרך

One who travels between cities is obligated to say *Tefilas HaDerech*. *Tefilas HaDerech* should be said as soon as one has traveled about a half of a mile outside one's city. Preferably, it should be recited while one is stationary. However, if one is in a car and stopping on the side of the highway would be very distracting – or possibly even dangerous, one may say the *tefila* while sitting in a moving vehicle. Since it is a *tefila*, it is best for each traveler to say it for themselves. However, if one is unfamiliar with the *nusach*,

he may hear it from another, have in mind to fulfill his obligation, and answer *amen*.

When traveling on an airplane, some say the *tefila* should be said immediately before the plane leaves the ground, while others say it should be said only once the plane has taken off. If one neglected to say it earlier, one can say the *tefila* for the duration of the flight.

5 Tips for Winter Break

1. Remember *Tefilas HaDerech!*

When traveling, always remember to say *Tefilas HaDerech*. If you're driving, you can call 212-DRIVING to listen to the *tefila* pre-recorded, and say it along, word by word.

2. Food: The *Chofetz Chaim* writes in the *Mishna Brura* that one must always remember to pack provisions even if he is going somewhere where food can be obtained.

3. Learn Torah: Even on vacation, there is a *mitzvah* to learn Torah every day. One can review what he learned last quarter, or procure a *sefer* on a topic that he has a special interest in.

4. Tzedaka: It is a *segula* to give *tzedaka* before taking a trip. Already on the road with no *pushka*? No problem! Log on to www.ytcteam.org from anywhere and click the "Donate" tab!

5. Relax! Don't "over plan" your vacation. Make sure there is time to relax and recharge yourself. Remember: one who takes time off in order to strengthen his learning gets "*schar*" for his vacation as well!

YTC Spotlight

Yeshiva Holds Special Assembly for Earthquake Victims

YTC students and faculty assembled this week in the wake of the earthquake that recently devastated Haiti. "When a tragedy of this magnitude befalls our fellow man, the only reaction one can have is to feel their pain and suffering, call out to G-d, and to look into yourself for ways you can improve," said Rabbi Mordechai Palgon, Rosh HaYeshiva and Principal. Rabbi David A. Levine, Secular Studies Principal, also spoke at the assembly about the scope of devastation and relief efforts that were underway.

The catastrophe has additional significance to YTC because



several of our staff members have family in the area of the devastation. The Yeshiva's custodian, Jean Marcel, hails from Haiti and was awaiting news from his family. Additionally, Mr. Marc Agenor, long-time Math instructor, spoke of his brother, nieces and nephews. His brother lives in the United States but had been in Haiti making a presentation at The Hotel Montana, a five-story, four-star hotel with over 140 rooms, occupied by nearly 300 people at the time of the quake. The hotel completely collapsed. Mr. Agenor spoke emotionally of the dread he felt when he heard the news. His family desperately attempted to learn the fate of his brother, but communication with the island-nation was impossible. At 2:15 A.M. he received a call reporting that his brother had



Hotel Montana before and after the quake

survived. Mr. Agenor related how he tempered the joy of that phone call with the profound sadness and pain he felt, realizing that many others just like him were waiting by the phone for a call that would never come.

The mood was somber as the Yeshiva banded together as one, students and faculty alike, as *Tehillim* were recited and silent prayers were offered for all those affected by the tragedy.



Good Returns from Stock Market Challenge

by Mr. Aaron Gillego

To buy or not to buy? That is the question that the students in Mr. O'Toole's Business Math class grappled with each week as participants in the Annual Stock Market Challenge.

The five students competed as two teams against other Jewish high schools nationwide. The Challenge, sponsored by the Sy Syms School of Business of Yeshiva University, began in November and concluded last Friday. After twelve weeks, the team of juniors (Rafael Goldglanz and Yehuda Gruberger) finished in 29th place, while the team of seniors (Etai Aburos, Uriel Hasson, and Sholom Selmar) ranked a respectable 86th out of over 200 teams.

The teams in the Challenge were allotted a hypothetical \$100,000 to invest in the New York Stock Exchange. Each week, the teams decided on which stocks to buy, hold, or sell and they monitored the

earnings of their "portfolios". Weekly rankings were then published by the Sy Syms School of Business based on the teams' stock performance. In the third week of competition, the YTC team of seniors reached their highest ranking: #13 in the nation.

If you peered into the Business Math classroom, you might have witnessed a Warren Buffet in the making. Equipped with laptops, the five students were guided by Mr. O'Toole in researching companies listed on the NYSE, using many different media, to inform their investment decisions.

"At first the students didn't know how investing even works," Mr. O'Toole explained. "But over time, the students really learned about more than just the stock market...They learned how to do research and how to work together."