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ט' שבט תשע"א

פרשת בשלח

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Dvar Torah - Attaining Goals by Rabbi Yaakov Dreyfuss



It seems to be a frustrating cycle. Someone or something in our lives inspires us to improve our performance of *Mitzvos* and we respond by increasing our commitment to the Torah, only to lose steam after a short while. We slip back to our previous status quo, waiting for the next dose of inspiration to give us another short-lived boost. What can we do to maintain each 'high' and achieve long-term growth? The *Ralbag* at the beginning of this week's *Parsha* provides an insight that can help answer this question.

In order for the *Bnei Yisroel* to become the chosen nation of Hashem and receive the Torah, it was necessary that they leave *Mitzrayim*. The *Ralbag* explains that it is for this reason that Hashem went to great lengths to ensure that *Bnei Yisroel* would not attempt to return to *Mitzrayim*. The Chumash tells us that Hashem didn't lead *Bnei Yisroel* directly to *Eretz Yisroel* in order that they wouldn't head back to *Mitzrayim* upon seeing the ravages of war. Additionally, Hashem made sure that *Bnei Yisroel* took

all their possessions with them, plus the finest of the *Mitzrim's* possessions so that the prospect of returning to *Mitzrayim* would never be worth it. Hashem had an objective to accomplish, so He did everything possible to bring about its realization.

The *Ralbag* applies this concept to the way we, too, should conduct ourselves. In any endeavor we undertake, it is critical to employ every effort (within human means) to achieve success. If a project or mission is important enough for us to invest our time and energy in, it should be implemented in a calculated way, doing everything within our ability to ensure success.

It seems that the *Ralbag* would advise us to respond to inspiration by taking small but meaningful steps. Each commitment we make should be thought through carefully, taking into account any obstacle that may potentially deter us. We should work hard and stay focused on our goal until we attain it. We will then enable ourselves to build on our success, reaching awesome heights in *Avodas Hashem*.

Dvar Halacha – Tu B'Shevat

This Thursday is *Tu B'Shevat*, the *Rosh HaShana* for trees. Some have a *minhag* to eat fruits on this day. When one has a group of fruits and vegetables in front of himself that he plans to eat, which should he eat first? If the collection is made up of either all fruits or all vegetables, he should first choose any of the seven species for which *Eretz Yisroel* has been praised. Next, he would choose any of the fruits that are whole, then fruit that you would usually prefer, and lastly, the fruit he most wants to eat now.

If it is a collection of fruits and vegetables, you should first choose the one you would usually prefer, regardless of whether the *brachah* happens to be *ha-aitz* or *ha-adamah*. Secondly, one would choose the fruit or vegetable he most wants to eat now. The next most preferable item is any one of the seven species for which *Eretz Yisroel* has been praised. Lastly, he would choose any whole item, or if none of the above apply, any of the fruits that require *ha-aitz*.

YTC Spotlight

The Weekly Quiz

In which tefilah do we say 24 words in a row that end with the letter “ך”?

Special thanks to Akiva Sugerman for submitting this week's question. Answers or ideas for future questions may be submitted in writing to the Spotlight office or emailed to Quiz@ytcteam.net. The first correct answer submitted will be announced in the next Spotlight. You need not be a student to participate. *Hatzlochah!*

Answer to last week's question:
Q. How long did Shmuel HaNavi live?
A. 52
Mazel Tov to Will Coane and Boaz Moss (again!) for being the first two to submit the correct answer.

26th Annual Dinner an Inspirational Success!

This past Sunday, the Yeshiva held its 26th Annual Scholarship Dinner at Jungle Island in Miami Beach. Nearly 450 people assembled to pay tribute to our worthy honorees and support the sacred work of our institution. The tremendous expression of love and support for the Yeshiva was truly an uplifting and inspiring sight to behold. The substantial outpouring of funds pledged both during the campaign and at the dinner itself exceeded the Yeshiva's ambitious seasonal goal.

As they entered, guests were treated to an extensive smorgasbord of hot dishes and delicacies on the outdoor third floor veranda overlooking Biscayne Bay. (Let's see them do that in New York in January!) The formal dinner program commenced in the Tree Top Ballroom with the recitation of *Tehilim* and a special message from Toras Emes President Dr. Allan I. Jacob. Mr. Ronnie Cohen, a longtime friend and supporter of the Yeshiva, presented a snapshot of the Yeshiva's operations and finances. He then electrified the crowd by announcing a generous grant that would match, dollar for dollar, all funds raised that



evening. After a multi-media presentation highlighting the Yeshiva's significant impact on the Jewish communities of South Florida, Rabbi Ephraim Shapiro, Rav of Congregation Shaaray Tefilah of North Miami Beach, urged those in attendance to redouble their efforts in supporting the Yeshiva.

Special presentations were made to our venerable Guests of Honor, Mr. & Mrs. Marcos and Tiffany Lapciuc, and our most deserving *Kesser Shem Tov* Awardees, Mr. & Mrs. Aaron and Randy Groffman. The crowd was served a scrumptious dinner catered by Emerald Catering and

enjoyed a moving musical interlude by Akiva Shechter, an up-and-coming new voice on the Jewish musical scene.

The real beneficiaries of the evening, however, were the 643 precious children and young men of YTC/TEAM who are walking along the path of educational excellence, and are being imbued with a lifelong thirst for Torah learning and the tools to succeed in life. It is only through the outstanding generosity of our supporters that the Yeshiva is able to continue to transmit the Torah to the next generation of K'lal Yisroel.

