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ז' חשוון תשע"ב

פרשת לך לך

Candle Lighting 6:19 PM

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ראשי הישיבה

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Dvar Torah - FOCUS! - by Rabbi Mordechai Palgon

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וישמע אברם כי נשבה " את אהיו, וירק את חניכיו... " (י"ד, י"ד),
"And Avram heard regarding the capture of his brother (Lot), and he armed his trainees..."

Many of us feel secure after an uplifting Rosh Hashana, Aseres Yimei Teshuva, and Yom Kippur, and ending with a spiritual high with the Simchas HaChag of Succos, Shmini Atzeres, and the dancing on Simchas Torah. We have had a month-long reconnection with Hashem, revitalizing our relationship with Him and renewing our commitment to Torah and Mitzvos. We are certain that we can move successfully for quite a while without any need to protect ourselves from faltering. Yet, we see, remarkably, in this week's Parsha, the vulnerability of human nature.

Avraham Avinu, upon hearing of Lot's capture, prepares an army of 318 men against the four mighty kings. The *Pasuk* states that he equipped the militia with ammunition. The Gemara in Nedarim (32a) cites the opinion of Shmuel, who says that he armed them with jewels and precious stones. *Tosfos* in *Meseches Chulin* (47b) explains that this was done in order to ensure that they would stay focused on fighting and saving lives, rather than being distracted by collecting the spoils of war.

A few notes on the caliber and nature of this "army" will illuminate the lesson taught in this *Chazal*.

1) By Torah law (Devarim 20:8), any man who commits a sin is excused from army service. These men were pure Tzadikim, devoid of any sins whatsoever.

2) Some opinions hold that this "army" was Eliezer, the *eved* of Avraham Avinu, (the *Gematria* of Eliezer = 318, which is the same number mentioned in

the *pasuk*). The Medresh (Bereishis Rabah 59:8) teaches us that Eliezer controlled his Yeitzer Horah like Avraham Avinu. Additionally, all the Torah that Avraham Avinu knew was taught to Eliezer (Gemara Yoma 28b).

3) This army understood the great mitzvah of Pidyon Shvuyim, ransoming a Jewish captive. This is called a "Mitzvah Rabah", where one may sell a Sefer Torah to perform this great mitzvah. (*Tosfos*, Bava Basra, 8b)

Given all the above, the question arises: Why was it necessary for Avraham to load their pockets with precious stones in order for them to stay focused on saving Lot? We are dealing with the greatest Tzadikim, devoid of any sin, who were commissioned to perform the greatest mitzvah! It seems implausible that they would be enticed to chase after gold and gems, abandoning their mission of Pidyon Shvuyim.

We see from here that Avraham Avinu understood the human susceptibility and vulnerability to *gashmiyus*. Even the greatest Tzadikim are human beings with a *guf* that can easily lose sight of the ultimate purpose. This is not due to any lack of intelligence or understanding; rather, it is merely human nature.

Once the urgency of their mission had shifted out of the spotlight, the glitter of gold would attract their attention. By providing them with wealth at the start of this campaign, Avraham protected his men from the allure of the booty so that they could remain focused on their true purpose.

Now that the urgency of the Yimei Hadin has passed, we too are certainly vulnerable when it comes to maintaining our commitments and goals. With the help of Hashem, let us all focus, perhaps devoting a few minutes to Mussar each day, so that the resolutions we made during *Elul* will be met with resounding success!

The Weekly Quiz

Q: When does the rarest Shemoneh Esrei occur?

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!

Mazal Tov

Shlomo Schloss and his kalla Miriam!



Rabbi Meth



Rabbi Medresh

New Faces at YTC - by Mayer Friedman, 11th Grade

Over the summer, the Y.T.C. faculty changed dramatically. With the addition of Rabbi Meth, Rabbi Medresh, and Rabbi Schloss in the Limudei Kodesh department and Dr. Cowett, Mr. Spring, and Mr. Reich in the Secular Studies department, the Yeshiva's educational team became even stronger.

Rabbi Meth, the Director of the Jewish Educational Center in Boca Raton, where he resides, teaches a ninth grade shiur. "His class is challenging," said Yehuda Mittel, one of his talmidim. Known for his timeliness and enjoyable tests, Rabbi Meth goes over the Gemorah for each one of his students, making sure they all understand, and feel comfortable with the material. Zalman Weiss commented that if his whole class is on time to davening, then Rabbi Meth will get them a cake.

Rabbi Medresh teaches Chumash and Halacha to Rabbi Palgon's 11th grade shiur, and also the 12th grade. He lives in Miami Beach and previously taught at Mechina.

Moshe Bloorian stated that "Rabbi Medresh is very easy going, enjoys spending time with his talmidim, and clearly loves Torah."

Rabbi Schloss, a father of three who resides in Miami Beach, was enlisted to teach the 12th grade Gemorah shiur. "He is a wonderful and cheery individual who always brings a smile to the classroom," said Joe Shwartz. Joe also commented that his Rebbi gets everyone involved, giving each student a challenge and the motivation to reach great heights.

For English, Rabbi Levine brought in Dr. Cowett and Mr. Reich. Jonah Berger said of Dr. Cowett, "If people don't get it in the beginning, you can be sure that he will do his best to help." Our new English teacher is known for having taught Peyton Manning and for his daughter's argument made through a painting of a cow in sunglasses playing the violin.

Mr. Reich, the 11th and 12th grade honors English teacher, lives in Hollywood and davens at the Young Israel on Shabbos. Students said that

Mr. Reich is an interesting teacher and that his class is challenging.

Mr. Spring was brought in from New Jersey to teach the Social Sciences. With a background working on Wall Street, Mr. Spring is the man for the job, bringing reality to the economics classroom along with his widely enjoyed sense of humor.



Dr. Cowett



Mr. Spring

Yeshiva Hosts Record-Breaking Blood Drive - by Chaim Benson, 12th Grade



On Sunday October 30, Yeshiva Toras Chaim hosted its 3rd bi-annual blood drive. Although each drive last year was a success, this drive outshone both previous drives, collecting a whopping 45 pints, outdoing the average drive by 5 times. The turnout consisted of talmidim (who of course didn't miss class), rebbeim and members of the community.

Bill Foty, director of the Community Blood Centers, commented that this was "a record-breaking drive." In addition to the chesed accomplished by giving blood, the drives at the Yeshiva are always a Kiddush Hashem. A big thank you to all those who participated. For those who were unable to attend, the Yeshiva will be hosting another drive later this year.