



A Taste of Torah Happily Ever After

By Rabbi Dovid Schwartzberg

Rabbi Leib Chasman (1869-1935), famous ba'al mussar and mashgiach (spiritual supervisor) of Chevron Yeshiva, once saw a student eating fish with great relish. "Tell me, young man," he asked him, "do you love fish?" When the student answered in the affirmative, Reb Leib replied, "If you love fish, then you should have cared for the one on your plate; you ought to have fed it and tried to make it happy. Instead, you devoured it." As the student groped for a proper response, Reb Leib explained, "Obviously, you don't love fish. You love yourself!"

Reb Leib was trying to drive home the point that what most people call "love" is really self-love. What the world around us sells is merely the selfish love of pleasurable fulfillment; it is nothing more than a glorification of man's baser instincts for physical and emotional gratification.

This is not our way. The Torah tells us in this week's parsha, "Yitzchok brought Rivka to the tent of his mother

Sarah; he married Rivkah, she became his wife and he loved her." (24:67) Look at the sequence of events. First, he took her to be his wife. Then, the Torah states, "and he loved her", not the other way around. Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch points out that this is the formula for Jewish marriage. The marriage plants the seeds of love, and the shared experience of giving to each other, of building a family together, of fulfilling the mitzvos together, of growing together in appreciation of the goodness of the Creator, these produce a deep-rooted love that flourishes and blossoms and bears the most wonderful fruit. Every shared event - every birth, every family celebration, every marriage of a child, every Shabbos when a husband and wife sit together at the table like king and queen - all of these add more blossoms of love to the flourishing tree of the marriage. This is why the love in a Jewish marriage keeps growing an deepening with each passing year.

Ask the Rabbi Mazel Tov

Abe from Los Angeles asked:

What does it mean when we say "Mazel Tov" to someone at a Simcha (joyous occasion)?

Dear Abe,

The word Mazal does not literally mean "luck." "Mazal" is literally associated with the 12 signs of the Zodiac, which are called the "Mazalot," but we use the word in a way which means more than

just the Zodiac. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto explains that there is a multi-levelled conceptual system through which G-d interacts with the physical Creation. In other words, "energy" which originates with Hashem travels through this system and eventually reaches us. At some point along the way, this energy is said to pass through the Mazalot, the stars and the planets, which then transfer it to the rest of Creation. This explains how people trained in astrology may know what

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Stories For The Soul

Thanks for the Memories

When we moved into our new Atlanta home, I found two shoe boxes in the hall closet full of wonderful old family photos. I called the previous owner, but was told, "They were there when we moved in and we did not know how to find the previous owner."

The boxes' presence really bothered me, as I knew that another family's precious memories were in our closet. I learned that their last name was "Harris" from junk mail that came to the house, and asked the neighbors about them. I had a few leads, but they all led nowhere.

A couple years later, I took down the boxes and looked through them carefully. I found a book from a school reunion in Fargo, North Dakota. The book had lists and I found the name Harris with my current address. It showed a maiden name of "Miner." Then I found another woman whose maiden name was Miner and she lived in Fargo. I called directory assistance and obtained the number.

What a surprise the lady had when I told her I was looking for Mary Miner Harris - her sister - and that I had her family photos. She gave me Mary's address in New Mexico and promised to tell her to expect a package from me.

Mary called when she received the boxes and we cried together. She thought they had fallen off the back of the moving truck. She was so delighted that she decided to make a special photo album for all her children. A few months later, one of her daughters called me from South Carolina and came to visit me.

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Kollel Happenings

POWERFUL PRAYER WITH RABBI KAPLAN AT AISH TUESDAYS

Join Rabbi Yossie Kaplan of the Denver Community Kollel Tuesdays 8 -9 pm at Aish Denver on a journey through the daily prayers as he uncovers the depth behind the timeless words uttered by the Jewish People for millennia.



SAVE THE DATE! WOMEN'S WELLNESS WORKSHOP NOV 11TH

Join The Women's Division of the Denver Community Kollel for an event you don't want to miss! Learn how to achieve health of mind, body and soul at the Denver Jewish Women's Wellness Workshop Sunday, November 11th, from 10 am to 2 pm at the McNichols Building, 114 W. Colfax Ave. For more info, contact Esti Schwab at esti@denverkollel.org or at 303-668-1878.



A DEEPER LOOK

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Sunday nights 7:40-8:30 pm at Kollel, 1516 Xavier, and Tuesday nights at Aish Denver 8-9 pm.

Interpersonal Issues Safeguarding a Lost Object

The finder is responsible to take steps to ensure that the lost item isn't claimed by a fraudster. If the claimant seems suspicious, the finder should conduct a background check to ascertain the reliability of the individual in question..

Adapted with permission from "The Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Pinchas Bodner (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

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will happen to an individual in the future. They are "reading," through the configuration of the Mazalot, the energy that is yet to be delivered. However, we are actually forbidden to engage in the prediction of the future via astrology, even though it may work. The source of this prohibition is, "You shall be tamim (pure, perfect, simple) with the L-rd your G-d."

The Talmud cites three life-issues which are directly affected by the Mazalot: life, children and livelihood. Elsewhere the Talmud seems to contradict this and states that "There is no Mazal regarding the Jewish People." The classical sources explain this to mean that the influence of Mazalot can be overcome by the Jewish People through prayer and other great merits.

Regarding prayer, the Shulchan Aruch states, "A person must pray with sincere supplication like a poor person begging at the door..." The Chafetz Chaim explains this to mean "that he must pray with supplication like one who is asking for mercy and remember that the fulfillment of his request is not in the hands of anything created, not an angel, nor a Mazal, nor a Star, etc., it is

all up to the will of Hashem, may His Name be blessed."

A Halachic application of Mazal is the custom of a mourner to say Kaddish on the Yahrzeit of a parent, because that day is one of "harmful Mazal" for the mourner, and the reciting of Kaddish affords him protection.

So, what do we mean when we say "Mazel Tov"? We are saying a brief prayer at this time which is strongly influenced by the Mazalot, that Hashem will ensure that the "energy" that is sent will be only for good.

Sources:

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto - Derech Hashem, 3:7:3.

Devarim 18:13.

Talmud - Mo'ed Katan, 28a, Shabbat, 156a.

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagen - Bi'ur Halacha, 132:1.

Rav Yisroel Meir Kagen - Mishna Brura, 98:3

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Stories for the Soul

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A few weeks later, Mary sent me a silver pin from New Mexico. I wear it often, and when someone asks me about it, I tell them it is my mitzva pin.

In this week's Parsha, Eliezer was charged with the task of finding a proper wife for Yitzchok. He chose

Rivka because she possessed the sterling trait of chesed, loving-kindness. Chesed is one of the hallmark characteristics of the Jewish people.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Baruch Lederman.