

A Taste of Torah Self & Self Worth

By Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

It is told that a fellow once walked into the Beis Medrash of the Kotzker Chassidim, who, in accordance with the teachings of their Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, placed a great emphasis on humility. Upon entering, he found the chassidim admiring what appeared to be an ordinary beggar. Upon inquiring as to the cause of their adulation, the visitor was informed, "This man is a truly humble person!" The visitor was now very confused. "Why shouldn't he be humble? He's nothing but a beggar! He hasn't got anything to be haughty about!" "Ah," replied the chassidim, "but it is precisely for that reason that we are in awe of him. For the haughtiest people are those who have nothing to brag about. And here we have a nobody who is not boastful!"

In this week's parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu is referred to as the humblest of all men. Such a statement initially seems perplexing, for we are discussing someone who stood up to Pharaoh, led, as well as rebuked, the entire Jewish

Nation, and even made demands of G-d Himself. How could one who was so assertive be regarded as humble?

Humility is not defined as one who thinks nothing of himself. On the contrary, a humble person is the one who recognizes his talents and abilities, and uses them to their fullest - but does not take credit for them. Such an individual recognizes that his gifts are G-d given, and are intended not for self-aggrandizement, but, rather, for serving the One who bestowed them upon him. Haughtiness and arrogance, on the other hand, are not necessarily a result of one's greatness, but due to an inflated sense of self.

There is no question that Moshe was a supremely talented individual. And he certainly utilized his abilities, accomplishing a tremendous amount in his lifetime. His greatness lay in that he never regarded his achievements as a reflection of his own worth, but as a reflection of G-d's greatness. The complete self-negation of his entire essence before G-d is what made him the humblest of all men.

Ask the Rabbi The Name Game

Jeremy Ottenstein asked:

I have noticed that while Ashkenazim name their children after animals, Sephardim do not. Is this just a coincidence or is there some kind of Halachic disagreement between the two groups?

UTILAUDIT@aol.com wrote:

Why is it that Sephardim will name their children after living people but

Ashkenazim do not?

Dear Jeremy & UTILAUDIT,

After investigating this subject, I agree with your distinction about animal names. Ashkenazim do, in fact, often name their children after animals, while Sephardim do not. One phenomenon that I encountered in my research is that when Rabbi Yosef Karo (a noted

Stories For The Soul

Not What It Seems

On the day of the Feingold wedding, the guests entered the ballroom in Ashdod and couldn't contain their shock. The floral arrangements were stunning, a seven-piece band was playing, and a seven-course dinner was served.

The Feingolds had always portrayed themselves as poor people. In fact, many of the guests had helped raise money for this very wedding.

The matter was so distasteful that it was all people talked about. Soon, the bride's parents couldn't help but sense resentment. After the wedding the situation only worsened.

Mr. Feingold went to the town rabbi to explain the situation.

"When I first came with my wife and daughter to look at the hall," he began, "we spoke with the owner's wife. She suddenly asked me, 'Are you related to Leo Feingold from Germany?' When I told her he was my father, her face paled.

"I am alive today only because of your father! He hid my family and saved us from the Nazis!" she told us.

"She insisted on making us a beautiful wedding to express her gratitude. We tried to talk her out of it. When we came to the wedding hall that night, we were as shocked as everyone else. I couldn't say anything because our benefactor had asked that her present remain a secret. When I realized the worsening attitudes of many of our friends, I requested her permission to reveal the truth."

That Shabbos, the rabbi told the whole story to the congregation.

Kollel Happenings

NEFESH HACHAIM, MONDAYS
@AISH W/RABBI SHACHNE
SOMMERS

Join Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers in studying the timeless work of Rav Chaim Volozhiner, Nefesh Hacham. Tuesday mornings 9:15-9:50 at Aish. For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Heyman at rmh@denverkollel.org or 303-820-2855.



HEART OF THE TORAH - AT AISH OR ANYWHERE

Join Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger to learn the Ten Commandments - the Heart of the Torah - in depth. This 14-part series will complete the study of the Ten Commandments just in time for the August 1st national and local Grand Siyum Hashas celebrations. Classes are held at Aish & broadcasted via gotomeeting.com. For information, email info@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.



COMMUNITY WIDE SIYUM HASHAS CELEBRATION

The Denver Jewish Community will gather on August 1st, 2012 to honor local Daf Yomi participants and celebrate Torah study in Denver. Celebrate with Denver's own devoted Daf Yomi participants, people who have taught us the meaning of commitment over the past 7 1/2 years. To register, or for more information, visit the Kollel's website, www.denverkollel.org, or call 303-820-2800 ext. 7.

Interpersonal Issues

If A Lost Item Has No Valid Identifying Marks

A lost item with no valid identifying marks is still the property of the owner until he is aware of the loss. Therefore, one who finds such an item prior to the owner's awareness of the loss may not keep the item.

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

Ask the Rabbi

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Sephardic Posek) lists the spelling of names for the purpose of writing a Get, none of the names are "animal names;" yet when the Rama (a noted Ashkenazic Posek) lists names for the same purpose he includes many names of animals. I asked Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, shlita (zt"l), "Why would one group choose names of animals and another would not?" He told me that really neither group is naming their offspring for animals. since we are careful about "contaminating" our children with the tumah of non-Kosher animals. So why do Ashkenazim seemingly name children after animals? The answer is that when they name the children they are not naming them after the animals per se, but are recalling the qualities of the great people of early generations who are exemplified by those positive animal traits. When someone is named "Aryeh", the trait of Yehudah is being evoked, a "lion-like" - "royal" "king of the beasts." With the name "Zev," we are recalling Binyamin, whose character was "wolflike - "a mighty and fearless

warrior". The animals are mere symbols of very human qualities. "Yehuda ben Teima said: Be as fearless as a leopard, as light as an eagle, as fast as a deer and as powerful as a lion, to do the will of your Father in Heaven."

The reason that Sephardic Jews name children after a living relative is in order to honor the one after whom the baby is named. Ashkenazim do not name their children after living relatives, because although it would be a bestowal of great honor, it would be considered an ayin hara ("evil-eye") for the living relative - i.e., naming the child after someone might bring on that person's early demise. I asked Rav Scheinberg shlita (zt"l) if it would make a difference if the relative said that they are not concerned about the ayin hara. He said that even if they said that they are not concerned, we wouldn't do it because our assumption is that deep down they probably do really care.

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Stories for the Soul

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People again were surprised - but this time at themselves for speaking disparagingly without all of the facts.

As we see in this week's Parsha, speaking lashon hara can have a terrible

effect. This is even more so when the disparaging talk is not true.

Heard from Rabbi Paysach Krohn. Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.