



From the desk of  
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad \* Batei Hora'ah \* Religious Services \* Marriage Licensing \* Kashrut \* Mikvaot \* Eiruvim

# TORAT Parashat Vayeilech – Shabbat Shuva HAMELECH

## Forgive and Get Wet

In Masechet Taanit (25b), we are told of a drought. No rain, no water, nothing to drink, crops would not grow. So what did they do? They called for a Yom Tefillah, a *taanit*, and sent leading Torah Scholars to lead the services. First Rabbi Eliezer prayed the special taanit prayer of 24 blessings, but still no rain.

Then Rabbi Akiva approached the podium, uttered two “Avinu Malkeinu” lines and the Heavens opened up and poured. Just so that no one would misunderstand, a Heavenly Voice proclaimed: It is not that R’ Akiva is greater than R’ Eliezer; it is just that he is more forgiving.

Asks R’ Yisrael Salanter: Does this that he is more forgiving not make him greater?

Answers R’ Yisrael: No. There are different approaches in service of Hashem. R’ Eliezer was a *talmid* of Beit Shamai. Shamai was a big *talmid chacham*. No one should think that he had “bad” *midot*. It was not “bad” *midot*. It was a thought-out approach. Shamai felt that it was his duty to stand up for *kavod haTorah* and not to let others step on him. Hillel was more easygoing. When others insulted him, he did not make any issue over it.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu deals with people *midah keneged midah* – how you deal with others is how Hashem deals with you. R’ Eliezer was a great *talmid chacham*. But when he felt wronged, he was not so forgiving (Bava Metzia 59b). He must have felt that it was his duty to stand up for

*kavod haTorah*. So Heaven made no leniencies for him. Rabbi Akiva was from Beit Hillel. He did not defend himself when insulted or wronged. He forgave freely. Therefore, when he prayed, Heaven responded in kind and dropped all charges.

## Long Live the Humble

Rokei’ach also writes that one who forgives others will have his prayers answered.

Such an attitude also lengthens one’s days. Rav Huna son of R’ Yehoshua was ill. Rav Pappa came to visit him. He saw that he was quite ill. He told the family to prepare the burial shrouds. But then his health improved. Rav Huna was back on his feet. Rav Pappa was embarrassed to meet him after having claimed that he was a lost cause. But Rav Huna reassured him: You were right! I was about to die. But I heard a Heavenly Voice proclaim: He is not insistent upon others. He does not have this policy of “getting even”. So give him more time. (Rosh Hashanah 17a)

Shaarei Teshuva calls it a great “Petach Tikvah” – opening of Hope – having this easygoing and forgiving disposition. It clears one’s slate the easy way.

In fact, the whole impact of reciting the thirteen attributes of mercy works best when accompanied by a person acting with those very attributes in his social interactions. Be nice to others and Hashem will be nice to you! Be kind to others and Hashem will be kind to you.



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### The Sick Boy

A couple had two children and the couple died in an auto accident. The surviving children were a son and a daughter. The son was married, no children, and the daughter was yet to be wed. The parents left over sizable living quarters.

The son felt that the house was his. He was the son and *bechor* and what is there to talk about? In Torah law, the son inherits. He would not leave his sister out in the cold. She could stay in the house until she gets married. But the house is his.

The daughter felt differently. Her brother was already married and had a home of his own. She was an orphaness with no parents to marry her off. Give me the house, she declared, and I have something to start out with in life.

The matter was brought to a Rabbinical court who, for some reason, put the house in the possession of the daughter. The son was appalled. He could not accept this ruling. He was upset and could not speak nicely to his sister. He remained married for years, childless. It never dawned on him that his childlessness could be the fruit of *machloket*.

After a while, he and his wife decided to move to Eretz Yisrael, his sister still single. He opened a yeshivah and was devoted to his *talmidim*, some of whom even came from overseas. A number of years passed and one of his overseas' students became ill. The Rosh Hayeshivah tended to him personally and understood that he had to be hospitalized. The boy's father was summoned

and he made an emergency trip to be with his son in his hour of need.

In the hospital, the *bachur* was undergoing intensive testing by leading professors. In the hallway of the hospital, the Rosh Hayeshivah and the father began chatting. The father mentioned how his parents-in-law had been killed in a tragic auto accident while his wife was still single, an only child.

Something about the story aroused the Rosh Hayeshivah's curiosity. He double-checked: Are you sure that your wife has no siblings?

"I never heard of any," was the reply.

The Rosh Hayeshivah then asked about names and places and became convinced that he was dealing with his nephew. He asked the father to ask his wife if she perhaps had some long lost brother.

That very day, the father spoke with his wife, as he did daily while overseas. Nonchalantly, he asked, in the middle of conversation, did you ever have a brother?

"Why do you ask?" asked his surprised wife.

"Because the Rosh Hayeshivah wants to know."

At that, she opened up and told her husband something she had never yet confided to him. "Yes, I had one brother, but we cut ties years ago, before our marriage, and I know nothing about him."

The father returned to the Rosh Hayeshivah with the information. After some exchange of personal



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information, the Rosh Hayeshivah proved that he was the uncle of his *talmid*.

"Now I understand why I am so dedicated to this *talmid*," he exclaimed. "He is my own flesh and blood."

They spoke more and it came out that the Rosh Hayeshivah was still childless and his nephew was an only child. It dawned on both of them, that mutual lack of harmony could be at fault. It was decided, then and there, that the mother of the *bachur* should fly in and brother and sister should meet and forgive each other. It was some meeting, accompanied by many a tear.

And suddenly... the *bachur's* health took a turn for the better. The doctors were baffled. And in the Rosh Hayeshivah's home... good news... his wife was finally expecting her first! This, too, caught doctors by surprise.

But the close family members who knew the inside story felt that they understood the sudden change of events. Peace is the one and only container for blessing!

### Holy Lips

In Tevet 5779, Miriam was 32 years old, still single. She met her friend Gila on Chanukah and told her that it seemed that she would have to celebrate her 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday yet single. They decided to go and pray at holy sites on the last day of Chanukah.

After some prayers, they found a restaurant at which to dine. As they ate, the proprietress came out of the kitchen and began berating one of the

waiters in front of all of the customers. The irreligious boy just stood there humiliated.

After the angry proprietress stomped back into the kitchen, Gila ran up to the teenager and told him, "Wow! You just heard someone embarrass you and you said nothing in return! That means that you now have an amazing power of blessing! Please bless my friend that she should get engaged soon."

At first, the waiter did not understand what she wanted from him. Then she begged, "Please, just repeat after me, "Miriam bat Sarah should become a *kallah* within a month."

The waiter said those words. Gila then asked him to bless her father for a complete recovery. He was 73 years old and had come down with a serious illness.

The boy again repeated her words.

That very evening, someone called Miriam with a *shidduch* suggestion! Sure enough, less than a month later, she was engaged! May we add that Gila's father also recovered. Doctors were astounded. Gila was not. She knew that there is a special *koach haberachah* given to those who swallow insults without responding.

May we all have the ability to forgive and to bless. Not to respond to insult and jeers. Be happy and pray for our peers.

**Gemar Chatima Tovah**  
**Shabbat Shalom,**  
**Mordechai Malka**