

HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

The *mitzvah* of *bikur cholim*, visiting a sick person, according to the Bahag is a *mitzvah mid'oraissa*, while in the Rambam's opinion (Avel 14:1) it is a *d'Rabanan*. As we know, it is a *mitzvah* that "*ein lahem shiur*" there is no limit of time or times that one is obligated to be *mekayem* this *mitzvah*. However, this is only true if the sick person is not disturbed by it. The *mitzvah* applies to everyone, and even a very important person must visit a simple person, and there is no exemption of **אינו לפי כבודו** (YD 340:1). The proper behavior is that close relatives and friends should visit the sick as soon as they find out about the sickness, and the ones that are more distant should go only after three days. If it suddenly turned into a more severe condition, even the more distant ones go immediately. There are a few different purposes for *bikur cholim*. 1) To *daven* for the sick person, and the Ramban's opinion (quoted in YD 340:4) is that if one didn't *daven* for the sick person, he was not *yotzeh* his obligation. When one *davens* in front of the *choleh*, there is no need to mention his name, and one could *daven* in any language, but if it is not in front of him, then preferably one should *daven* in *lashon hakodesh* (ibid 5), and mention his/her name. 2) That the visitor should ensure that the room where the sick person is should be clean and fresh, and look after the different needs of the *choleh*; and 3) To lift the spirit of the sick person, strengthen and cause him a feeling of pleasantness, to sit next to him, if he so desires, or to watch over him, if he is in need. The Shlah Hakadosh writes, that *bikur cholim* is for both the body and the soul of the sick, meaning to benefit his body and care for his physical needs, and for his soul, by *davening* and lifting his mood. The Shulchan Aruch writes (YD 340:4) that we should not visit the sick in the first three hours of the day, because at that time his sickness becomes lighter, and people are not going to *daven* for him, and so too, we should not visit the sick in the three last hours of the day, because the sickness is intensified, and one may come to give up hope on the sick person. The Rambam writes that the reason not to visit in the first three hours is because at that time people are taking care of the personal needs of the *choleh*, like cleaning and feeding, and this causes him to feel uncomfortable, if it is done in front of visitors. The Aruch Hashulchan (8) writes that there is no prohibition to visit during these hours, rather it is sound advice, and that may be why we are not *makpid* about these times. Some say that an enemy should not visit the sick, because it may convey a message that he is happy over his condition (Shu"t Rama 19). If a person has a sickness which is contagious, and there is a definite danger to visit him, one is not allowed to visit, other than those that are absolutely needed (Radvaz 3:627), and even if there is only a possibility of danger it is also not permitted (Tzitz Eliezer 9:17 5:4). However, where the probability of contracting the sickness is remote, one should not refrain from visiting (Shu"t Rama 19). It is permitted to visit the sick on Shabbos, and *daven* on his behalf, and make a "*mi shebeirach*" for a *choleh messukan* on that day. But, if the visitor will be heart-broken from the visit, he is not supposed to visit on Shabbos. If the sick person asks his visitor to write down any instructions in the form of a testament, the visitor should not try to get out of it, especially if the refusal could deteriorate the patient's condition. Even if the sick person expresses himself improperly towards Hashem, *chas veshalom*, it is preferable that the visitor should not reproach him, because a person is not responsible for what he says when he is suffering. If the sick person requests from his son a food that could be dangerous to his health, it is prohibited to fulfill his will. There are opinions that even if it will just damage him, or even if he says that he will not forgive his disobedience, the son may not comply. If a person does *bikur cholim* over the phone, through a messenger or a letter, he has not completely fulfilled his obligation, because only by a personal visit could all the components of the *mitzvah* be accomplished, but whatever he can do to make him feel better is considered a *mitzvah*.

THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ... By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (Melachim II 4:1-37)

I'd like to present a unique explanation to the opening story of this week's Haftara. A widow, identified as the wife of the Navi Ovadia, begs Elisha Hanavi to help save her sons who are about to be taken as slaves by her husband's creditor. She reminds Elisha that her husband was a *tzaddik* who, despite danger to himself, saved 100 N'veim from the clutches of Ach'av and his evil wife Jezebel, and fed them during the years of famine. To pay for the food, Ovadia was forced to borrow money, which is why she was in her present predicament. What does Elisha reply? "מה אעשה לך", seemingly indicating that his hands are tied and he can't help; yet he promptly proceeds to tell her exactly what to do! The Abarbanel explains as follows: The Navi reminds the widow that the loan her husband took was with interest, a clear violation of the Torah. Chazal tell us that one who lends money with *ribis* will never see any blessings from any of his property, and this also applies to the one who pays the interest! So despite his good intentions, Ovadia sinned, and as a result his property will never be able to produce the money you need to save your children. Hence the Navi's request "הגיד לי מה יש לך בבית", tell me what you have in the house. There is conceivably a way to help you, if you have something that you yourself earned through your own labors through which it is possible for Hashem's blessings to come. She replies, yes; I have a small amount of oil that fits the description. The Navi replies, fine; but now you must borrow pots and pitchers from your neighbors, for even the pots in your house cannot be used. And furthermore, even the borrowed utensils cannot rest on the ground of the house. What should you do? The Mishnah (Gittin 77a) explains that a woman's lap or basket is Halachically considered her domain (Reshus) no matter where she sits. So, while you pour oil into the borrowed pots, make sure to keep those utensils in your hands and off the ground, ensuring that they are not affected by your husband's house. That is why the Navi tells her "והמלא תשיא", as soon as the pot you are holding is filled, carry it away so as not to put it on the floor of the house! It's amazing to see how the Halacha must be preserved even when performing a miracle!

FROM THE PEN OF RAV S.R. HIRSCH... By Rabbi Naftoly Katzenstein

ו-ישב בין קדש ובין שור ויגר בגרר - The Torah tells us that *Avraham* settled in the desert in the *Negev*, yet at the same time, he 'lives' in Gerar, the capital city of Pilishtim. What is the Torah's message in this apparent conflicting report of *Avraham's* residence? *Avraham* moved to the *Negev* in anticipation of the birth of *Yitzchak*. Isolation in the desert would shield the growing child from the pernicious influences of the residents of *Canaan*. However, total isolation of *Yitzchak*, where he will never come in contact with the outside world, is equally as dangerous as full exposure. R' Hirsch notes that a person who has always been protected from the external world, and has never seen other ways of life, will surely fall under the newly exposed negative influences. Thus, *Avraham* will take *Yitzchak* from time to time to see the city of Gerar. In this way he will be able to show and instruct *Yitzchak* how to reject the unacceptable way of life that is the product of non-Torah observance.

SHABBOS SCHEDULE - KNESSES YISRAEL

שבת				ערב שבת		
מעריב	מנחה	סוק"ש	שחרית	שקיעה	מנחה	הדלק"ן
5:27	4:07	9:13	6:50/8:20	4:38	4:23	4:20

SHACHARIS Sun 7:45, Mon-Fri 7:00; **MAARIV** Mon-Th 9:30; **MINCHA/MAARIV** Sun 4:23, next Fri. 4:18 (candles 4:15)

KNESSES NEWS

BOYS CHOIR kickoff in the Shul, Sunday 6:30-7:30PM, grades 3-9, all are welcome! Perform at *chanukas habayis* dinner on Dec. 20
MAZEL TOV! to Mr. and Mrs. Avi and Denise Grossman on the Bas Mitzvah of their daughter Chani
MAZEL TOV! to Mr. and Mrs. Behrend on the engagement of their grandson Yitzi Katz
SAVE THE DATE! Motz'ei Shabbos, Dec. 20, for *chanukas habayis* dinner and Kollel Dirshu *siyyum* of Sanhedrin
FRI. NIGHT ONEG for high school boys at Rubin, 28 Ivy Lane, 8:15PM

KOMMUNITY KORNER

PIRCHEI in the Shul, 2:30-3:30 for Pre-1a-8th grade boys. Special raffles and prizes! **AVOS UBANIM** on Motz'ei Shabbos, 6:30
MAZEL TOV! to Mr. and Mrs. Tevy Mindick on the birth of a granddaughter, to Mr. and Mrs. Meir Adler
MIKVAH OF NEW HEMPSTEAD, 109 Brick Church, is open on Shabbos/Yom Tov, please call 669-0861
FRIDAY NIGHT Avos Ubanim at Zichron Yehuda (Rabbi Bronspigel) 7:45PM, & Chumash shiur for men, rotating speakers
SHABBOS MINCHA at Tefilla L'Moshe, 1:30/3:00PM (Sun. 1:30), **MAARIV** 7:00/8:15/9:45PM; **SUN SHACHARIS** 7:30 & 8:30
DAILY SHACHARIS at Kehillat New Hempstead 6:00; at Zichron Yehuda (2 Kakiat Ln) 6:40AM; **SUNDAY** 6:30 & 7:30
SUNDAY MINCHA 1:30PM at Zichron Yehuda **MAARIV** daily at 9:15PM; **MINCHA** Mon-Thu 4PM at Tefilla L'Moshe
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KONTINUING KLASSES (aka ONGOING SHIURIM)

Daf Yomi: 1 hour before Shacharis (R' Adler)/ 9:45PM (R' Becher) at Knesses Yisrael; 6:00AM at Zichron Yehuda (*chabura*)
Maseches Sanhedrin (by R' Apter) daily 1 hour before Shacharis; **Ahavas Chesed** (by Rabbi Schabes) Tues. 9:10PM, at Knesses Yisrael
Hilchos Shabbos chabura, Shabbos, after the early minyan
Navi Melachim for men, by Rabbi Shmuel Moeller, Sundays 8:30-9:15, at Tefilla L'Moshe
Minchas Chinuch Sun. 8:30PM by R' Bronspigel at Zichron Yehuda
Maseches Bava Metzia, Shabbos afternoon 1 hour before Mincha, by R' Yehoshua Kohl at Kehillat New Hempstead
Ladies Shiur: Friday 8:00PM, by Rabbi Hirsch, at Grossman, 6 Manchester
 Mondays 8:40 PM, **Sefer Yehoshua**, by Mrs. Aviva Orlan, at Levy, 29 Fessler
 Wednesdays 10:45-11:45AM, **Pareshas Hashavua**, by Mrs. Sussi Brecher, at Lazar, 2 Tracey Ct. (corner of South Gate)

MECHOCHMAS HAS'FORNO... By Rabbi Shmuel Burstein

S'forno has an original understanding of the story of the daughters of Lot. At the naming of their children (19:37-38), S'forno insists (unlike Rashi and Chazal) that *both* daughters are to be commended. In his words: **מפני שהיתה כונת הנשים רצויה היה זרעם לשני גוים יורשי אברהם בקצת**, since both daughters of Lot were involved in their act **לשם שמים** they were both **זוכה** to nations who at least a partially inherited the House of Avraham. Rav Kupperman points out that this is a reference to Ruth of Moav and Na'amah of Amon (Shlomo HaMelech's wife). Each of these women in their own time entered into, and made a contribution to, the Am Hashem. They were privileged to share in some way in the inheritance of Avraham Avinu. S'forno closes this comment by quoting Chazal on the *pasuk* (Mishlei 3:6) **בכל דרכיה דעהו - אפילו לדבר עבירה** (In *all* of a person's ways should one know / love Hashem): this teaches us that one should love Hashem even in a matter that involves sin (Berachos 63a). This enigmatic idea of sinning for the sake of Hashem finds an echo in Nazir (23b), where the Gemara contrasts an **עבירה לשמה** with a mitzvah done **שלא לשמה**. Rav Kupperman explains this concept as "not having any pleasure whatsoever" from the sin. This involves the (extraordinary) *absolute control* of the human mind over the body during the sin. This is a mighty difficult task. But S'forno understands the daughters of Lot to have accomplished exactly this. Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, writes about an incident that happened in 1922, in the Russian town of Luban. One of the local *ba'alei batim* came down with a "strange" (*muzar*) illness that caused his tongue to greatly swell. When Rav Moshe came to visit him, the sick man requested to be with Rav Moshe alone, to explain the reason he was so afflicted. The man told Rav Moshe that a week earlier, on Shabbos parashas VaYera, he had asked: How, of all people, did the daughters of Lot have the merit of having the Moshiach be a descendant? After all, they did not flinch from living together with their father and later let everyone know who exactly fathered Moav. The man had then proceeded to speak of them with derision. That very night, two old ladies appeared to him in a dream. With their heads and faces covered they told this elderly Jew that they were the daughters of Lot. They explained that they had come from Olam HaEmmes (the world of truth) to answer why the Moshiach will descend from them. They could easily have told the world that, as they were from the family of Avraham, they, too, had a miracle happen to them, becoming pregnant without a man. They could have invented an entire religion with a claim similar to that of the Christian claim, that a miraculous baby came into the world, their "becoming pregnant through the Shechinah, *kivayachol*." (Rav Moshe's words). Instead, they told him, they purposely chose the names of their children to teach all mankind that it is impossible for a baby to be born *without* a biological father! In the *zechus* of teaching the *emmes*, they were rewarded by having Moshiach come from Moav (the "child from daddy"). Finally, they told the man that his mocking them was a grave *aveirah* and that Hashem had punished him with this strange illness. As soon as the man finished telling R' Moshe the dream he turned towards the wall and died. (I am grateful to Rav Schabes for sharing with me the source and correct version of this story.) **מצדיק רשע ומרשיע צדיק - תועבת ה' גם שניהם**; Hashem despises making a *tzaddik* appear wicked every bit as much as He despises making the wicked look righteous. Sobering thoughts when reviewing this *paresha* and teaching it to our children.

"A GIGANTIC LITTLE SECRET" ... By Rabbi Yosef Schwab

S'dom did not receive a warning prior to its destruction, unlike Nineveh. S'dom should have learned from Avraham, who resided in the vicinity, whereas Nineveh had no such role model. Similarly, Noach spent 120 years building the *teva* so people should learn a lesson.