

www.JEPQUEENS.com
76-01 147 St | Flushing, NY 11367



(718) 544-5213
JEPQueens@gmail.com

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

OPEN THE FAUCET AND RECEIVE THE FLOW OF MERCY!

PARSHAS NASO

The Jacoby's were planning on celebrating sheva brachos that evening, in the yard that they shared with their neighbor. Mr. Jacoby asked his neighbor, Mr. Leibowitz, for permission to plug loudspeakers and lights into his electric outlets. Mr. Leibowitz graciously agreed. A few hours later, the sheva brachos began. At midnight, the festivities were still going strong. The music, singing, and speeches were amplified loudly by the loudspeakers. Finally, Mr. Leibowitz called Mr. Jacoby, asking him to please stop using the loudspeakers, since it was so late. Mr. Jacoby assured him that that the party would soon be over. A little while later, the loudspeakers were still booming. Mrs. Leibowitz suggested to her husband, "Why not just unplug their extension cord?" Mr. Leibowitz realized that, indeed, that would be the simplest solution since the electricity for the loudspeakers was coming from his own outlet. As he went to pull the cord, he looked outside. Just then, he saw that the men were dancing around the chosson. Everyone was smiling and happy. Mr. Leibowitz hesitated. How would the chosson, kallah, and their guests feel if the sheva brachos suddenly turned dark. He decided not to interrupt the festivities and did not unplug the electricity. (Tomer Devorah by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero adapted by Rabbi Shmuel Meir Riachi)

The mitzvah of viduy, confessing one's sins, is the foundation of repentance for every sin. In that case, why is it specifically written in this pasuk which talks about repentance for the sin of theft? The **Chidushei HaRim** zt"l answers, that every sin which we do, has, within it, an aspect of theft. How so? Hashem gave us life to fulfill His will. When we use our lives and abilities to sin against Hashem, we are in effect stealing from Hashem. Therefore, it is appropriate to write viduy in the pasuk discussing theft. (Quoted in Iturei Torah by Aharon Yaakov Greenberg)

The **Midrash** (Bereishis 33:3) tells of a time when there was a drought. The prayers of the tzaddikim did not bring relief. A simple act of kindness, performed by one ordinary person, was the final act that rescued everyone from starvation. Rabbi Tanchuma understood that **mercy practiced in our**

*"They shall confess the sins which they committed and return the principal amount [of the object] of his guilt and add one fifth to that amount..."
(Bamidbar 5:7)*

world awakens corresponding mercy in heaven which then flows down to us. And that is why the famine ended.

After the sin of the golden calf, Moshe prayed to Hashem who forgave the Jewish People for it. After his supplications were accepted, Moses felt that it was an auspicious moment to ask Hashem to grant the Jewish people a way to obtain mercy, should

they fall and sin again, in the future. Hashem revealed the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy with which Hashem conducts the world.

The **Talmud** (Rosh Hashana 17B) quotes Rabbi Yehudah who says that "a covenant was established regarding the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy that they will never be returned empty-handed."

The **Talmud** (Shabbos 133B) brings the pasuk, "This is my G-D and I will glorify Him." (Shmos 15:2). Abba Shaul says, "Ve'anveihu" ("and I will glorify Him")

should be interpreted as if it were written in two words: *Ani vaHu*, me and Him [Hashem]. We should emulate Hashem's ways. Just as Hashem is compassionate and merciful, so too should we be compassionate and merciful.

When we copy Hashem's ways and transform our feelings into mercy, we awaken mercy in heaven, bringing a flow of blessing upon us.

Sefer **Tomer Devorah** teaches us how to emulate Hashem's Thirteen Attributes which are hinted to in Neviim, sefer **Micah** (7: 18-20). "Who is a G-D like You, who pardons iniquity, and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He does not maintain his anger forever, because He delights in mercy."

The **Tomer Devorah** says that the first of the Thirteen Attributes of mercy is that Hashem bears insult. At the very time that a person sins against Hashem, Hashem still allows that person life and movement of his limbs. The very limbs that are sinning against Hashem! Hashem bears the affront while still supplying the sinner the ability to sin against Him. Hashem's patience is beyond description!

Although it is not always easy, we are supposed to copy this characteristic of Hashem. Even if we are insulted, we should not withhold our goodness and kindness to the very one who harms us. We should do so even if we constantly do favors for a person, and he displays such ingratitude by using the same favors to harm us.

**When we ignore insults and emulate Hashem's trait of forbearance and kindness,
we bring a flow of mercy from heaven to us and to our world!**

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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