



Thoughts on the Parsha

Rabbi Avroham Goldman
MUSSAR TO A "FOOL"

One of the well-known tragedies associated with the Chanukah story is that of Chana and her seven sons. The cruel emperor demanded that the sons serve idols; when they refused, each one was brutally murdered. A variation of this story is related in **מדרש איכה פרק א, פסוק נ**. The medrash there describes that when Chana's youngest and only remaining son was about to be killed, Chana implored the emperor – "Please, kill me first, and only then kill my son!" The emperor self-righteously retorted – "Do you not know that your Torah commands: **וְשׂוֹר אוֹ שֶׁה אוֹתוֹ**" **ואת בנו לא תשחטו ביום אחד** – it is forbidden to slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day?! How then, can I concede to your request?" To which Chana and her son responded – "You are the biggest fool in the world!! Have you already fulfilled all of the mitzvos in the Torah, that this one (regarding the animal and its offspring) is the only one left to fulfill?"

One may wonder, what was Chana's goal in calling the em-

MTI Recent Happenings

Yitzy Zehnwirth
10th Grade

YESHIVA SHABBATON IN MARSHALL, IN

A few weeks ago, the yeshiva took a trip to the Agudah campus in Marshall, Indiana, for the first student-run shabbaton in MTI history. The talmidim, led by Avrohom Yosef Staum (bais medrash) and Akiva Cohen (12th grade), planned out in detail what the weekend would be like, from the food served on Shabbos, to the guys bringing water to the sports field. At 1:50 sharp on Thursday, all of the talmidim piled onto the bus, to set out on the three and a half hour drive. After arriving, while everyone went to unpack, some volunteers stayed behind to help set up dinner. That night, there was a three on three basketball tournament in the pavilion, followed by a massive bonfire with singing and dancing. Afterwards, everyone went to sleep, excited for the next day. On Friday, we davened, ate breakfast, learned in shiur, and then played great games of basketball and football. After that, we went to our bunkhouses to prepare for Shabbos. This

Featured Torah Message

Mordechai Wasser
11th Grade

A CHANUKAH LESSON

Probably the biggest question on Chanukah, (and maybe even in Judaism!), is why should Chanukah be 8 days and not 7 days? The only reason why Chanukah is 8 days is because the miracle of the oil burning was for 8 days. However, the first day should not be considered a miracle because there was enough oil for one day. Really, the miracle was that the oil lasted for an extra 7 days. So why is Chanukah 8 days?

There are many many answers given to this question. One answer is that the fact that oil burns at all is a miracle. Who says that fire put to a wick that is sitting in oil should burn? So even the first day was its own miracle - something we assume is natural. Although we take this for granted, we need to recognize and appreciate even the things that seem ordinary to us. This is one of the lessons of Chanukah. From the amazing miracles that Hashem performed on Chanukah, we realize and appreciate the everyday miracles that help us all of the time.

Sparks of Mussar

CARING FOR THE SICK

The Alter of Slabodka (1849-1927), R' Nosson Zvi Finkel, was one of the primary leaders of the mussar movement.

For the sick he had special regard. When he heard someone was ill, R' Nosson Zvi would immediately ask his name and his mother's name and rise to pray for his recovery.

Sitting in the waiting room of a dentist's office in Jerusalem, R' Nosson Zvi heard the sighs of a patient whose tooth had just been extracted. R' Nosson Zvi expressed his sympathy and stood up immediately to pray for his well being.

One could tell from the atmosphere in his home whether one of the talmidim of the yeshiva was sick. It was the talk of the day in his house. No money was too much to pay for the most effective medical treatment, even when the yeshiva was in dire financial straits.

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peror – “the biggest fool in the world”? What would she accomplish with that demeaning moniker?

Chana was a smart and righteous woman; her intent was certainly not merely to mock him. Rather, Chana was trying to give mussar to the emperor, in the hope that he would wake up to the reality of his depravity, and thus be inspired to reconsider. Employing the term ‘fool’ is a most potent form of mussar, for it implies that the subject is not his using his שכל, his G-d given wisdom, to determine the actions he takes. Man’s שכל is what defines him as a human, formed in Hashem’s image, distinct from the animal world. To be called a fool is mussar that would certainly reach a person’s core. Let us internalize the lesson that Chana taught us by ensuring that our שכל is what guides and fuels the decisions we make and the actions we take.



was followed by an inspiring rendition of kabbalas shabbos and maariv. Then, we went to the dining room and had a fantastic seudah. The next morning, after we davened, we had another delicious meal, followed by free time, which talmidim used to learn, rest, go on walks, or play board games. After maariv and havdalah, we went down to the pavilion to play some great basketball games. The following morning, we davened, learned, packed up, and got onto the bus for our ride back. All in all, this shabbaton was a great experience that all the talmidim enjoyed immensely.

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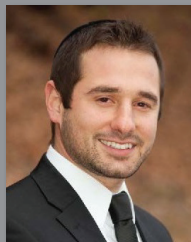


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