Look down from Your holy abode, from the heavens, and bless Your people, Israel.

The verse tells us that the word תַלְמִיד חָכָם, look down, always has positive meaning — to cast an eye, hospitable eye, on some person or object, as we see from the words רָאָה הָיָה (וּרְאָה: רָאָה) סְפָר: stand, the people. It is the only exception to this rule. Here it is used to express His looking down at us from above in order to bless us. The word תַלְמִיד חָכָם explains the important message of the verse: The act of giving תַלְמִיד חָכָם is so powerful that it can even transform [תַלְמִיד חָכָם] מִדַת הָרַחֲמִים, strict judgement, into חָכָם, mercy. This can be seen by the word חָכָם, which usually has a negative connotation. In this instance, where we are discussing תַלְמִיד חָכָם, the people do the חָכָם of giving their money to the rich and to the poor, it is transformed into a pleasant word.

The verse asks an interesting question, in the name of his father, the אֶלִיאֵל כַּפָר: Why does the חָכָם use a negative-sounding word by the giving of תַלְמִיד חָכָם in the first place, only to explain that it really has a positive meaning by adding the words and bless Your people? It would have been much simpler to just use the word תַלְמִיד חָכָם, look, which has no negative overtones at all, from the outset!

The verse tells us what is being wealthy. It is only when a person uses his money and resources for material blessing does not always have a positive influence on a person’s life. The more material reward one receives for his deeds in עַל קְרָב יִשְׂרָאֵל, the less the spiritual reward will remain for him in עַל קְרָב יִשְׂרָאֵל. Furthermore, wealth can sometimes lead a person to sin. Unfortunately, one can forget the source from where his wealth originated. The חָכָם itself testifies: יְשֻׁרוּן (אֶלִיָהוּ) grew fat and rebelled ... and it (אֶלִיָהוּ) deserted his maker (ר’ צְבִי), and: וַיִּשְׁמַן יְשֻׁרוּן וַיִּבְּעָט, and your cattle and flocks increase, and you amass silver and gold ... וְיֶבֶךְ, and your heart becomes haughty and you forget your God (ר’ חֲנוֹךְ, בֶּן אֶלִיָּהוּ), and: יֶבֶךְ, you say in your heart, ‘My own strength and the power of my hands earned me all this wealth’! (ibid, יי, אָרָיִף, יי.)

This, explains the תַלְמִיד חָכָם, is why the חָכָם uses the word חָכָם for riches can sometimes be negative. It only turns into a true חָכָם through the giving of חָכָם and to the rich, then the negative aspects of wealth are transformed into an everlasting reward and the ultimate חָכָם.

Adapted from: R’ Sonnenfeld on the Parashah (with kind permission from ArtScroll)

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R’ Leib Gurwitz, born in Grieve, Poland, to R’ Leib Gurwitz (originally of Gateshead, and his Rebbetzin was once seated on a plane next to an elderly gentleman. After his introductions, the man told the Rebbetzin that he could never forgive her saintly father, R’ Elia Lopian (originally of Gateshead, and his Rebbetzin was once seated on a plane next to an elderly gentleman. After his introductions, the man told the Rebbetzin that he could never forgive her saintly father, R’ Elia Lopian). He explained, “After the war, I tried to live my life as an unobserver Jew. As a young man, however, I once heard a ‘schmooze’ from your father about living for עַל קְרָב יִשְׂרָאֵל, however hard I tried!”

A mentor of many thousands of people, a spiritual leader and teacher, for almost seventy years
Ingrained Thanks

The hand that saved Shimon’s life? Such a hand I shouldn’t kiss.

“Saved Shimon’s life? What are you talking about? I just went to get a challah from him!” Confused, Yosef listened intently as the driver reviewed the episode that the children had told him. From then on, he felt a special connection with Shimon. Ponovez was one of the regular stops Yosef made every time he visited R’ Shalom Schwadron, and Shimon had a special place in his heart for Yosef as well. Unlike Yosef, Shimon recognized immediately that it had sent a messenger, Yosef Attias, to prevent him from toppling down the hard stone steps. In an extraordinary show of kindness, Shimon rose from his chair every time Yosef entered the room during his regular visits.

Yosef’s visit with the Shvii Yisroel during the last year of his life was most memorable. When Yosef asked the male nurse who attended him, “Could I see the Shvii Yisroel?” the nurse laughed at the request. “You have to understand — Shimon Hunetz is in no condition for visitors. He can’t see, and he has not been communicating with anyone.”

Yosef persisted. “I have a special relationship with Shimon. I just want to see him.”

“Okay,” the nurse relented. “But he’s not going to respond.”

The Shvii Yisroel was immobile, confined to a wheelchair with his head drooped down. Yosef slowly approached Shimon as the nurse whispered into his ear, informing him that Yosef was here to visit him. To the great surprise of the nurse, Shimon immediately opened his eyes. He motioned with his fingers toward Yosef’s hand. With a smile, he grasped Yosef’s hand and moved his lips in an attempt to speak.

“I must go and get the camera! He hasn’t been responding like this!” the nurse gasped. Yosef’s eyes filled with tears as the shocked nurse returned and snapped the shot. For Yosef Attias, Shimon’s special picture had surpassed the laws of nature.

Adapted from: Visions of Greatness (with kind permission from CIS)

An Ahavas Chessed Moment

It is important to be aware that the restrictions regarding a mesiras, collateral, apply only when the mesiras is not taken at the time the loan was given. However, when a loan is initiated, the lender may take the mesiras from the borrower in his home and is even permitted to take food preparation utensils since the borrower himself agrees to these terms of the loan. If the borrower asks the lender to enter his home to collect the mesiras, the lender may do so, but he may not pick anything and must accept whatever the borrower offers as a mesiras.

*This is intended only as a guide. Please review any real-life situations with a competent Rov.

In summary: The mesiras of taking a mesiras from an amit, widow, or of taking a utensil which is used in the preparation of food or going into the home of the borrower to collect the mesiras are not applicable if the mesiras was agreed upon at the time of the loan and the borrower gives the item to the lender.

Questions of the week

1. The list 11 specific things corresponding to 11 of the leshon Shemesh. Which ones were deliberately left out by the Rambam? Why?

2. How do we know that it can take forty years for a student to truly appreciate and understand his Rebbe?

Halacha Corner

The words of the Rebbe should not be said in a hurry; rather, it is preferable to say a few words slowly and with understanding than to rush through the entire discourse.

The Rambam explains that it is proper to say the words of the Rebbe without fully concentrating on what one is saying.

Reviewed by R Gedalyahu Eckstein

Since we only discuss 1-3 mitzvos, it is important to consider these mitzvos in the context of the bigger picture. Use them as a starting point for further in-depth study.
Dear R’ Elya Lopian’s widow, Rebbetzin Sternbuch, was young and still had the opportunity to change. If my beard would be as black as Moses’, I would not want a curse to correspond to his life? What are you talking about? I just went home in London, there lived a widow and her orphaned children. No matter how heavily involved R’ Elya was in his daily responsibilities for his family and she, he always found time for her. In fact, R’ Elya had left instructions that whenever she was to be shown in immediately.

When the Nazi war machine began its ‘blitzkreig’ (heavy blanket bombing) against London during World War II, terror reigned throughout the city. Casualties were everywhere.

Early one Sunday morning, the widow came to R’ Elya’s home in great anguish. As always, she was immediately escorted in.

“There is a ship leaving Wednesday to South Africa,” she began. “Shall I arrange passage for myself and my children, in the hopes of saving our live? Who knows when we will all be killed?”

R’ Elya’s answer was out of character, “I’m really sorry,” he told her, “I don’t have time to address this. Please come back later!”

Several hours later the widow returned and was ushered in. R’ Elya explained that he was busy preparing a prayer and to come back later. She came twice more that day and 5 times the following day. Each time R’ Elya couldn’t find time to discuss the matter. She finally gave up on the idea, for she would never leave without his permission.

On Thursday, all of England learned that the ship had been sunk by a German U-boat and there were no survivors. The widow, Rebbeztin Sternbuch, raised each one of her nine children to become exceptional boys great and she was was agreed upon at the time of the loan and corresponding to 11 of the psukim relevant.

Interestingly, her son, Sternbuch, returned the driver and escorted in. R’ Elya’s responses were not so uncharacteristic after all... he was trying to save an akhna and Hokim!

Rebbetzin Sternbuch

Your R’ Elya

R’ Shalom Schwadron came to his home in Gateshead to discuss growth in Yeshiva and Torah. During their discussion, R’ Shalom began crying. He realized how far away he was from where he could be. R’ Elya took a soft hold of his R’ Shalom’s beard and sang, “ירישלום ישלום, ישלום, ישלום, וינטש ארווי שואבהר וינטש! If my beard would be as black as yours…” R’ Shalom relaxed. He heard his R’ Elya’s message — he was young and still had the opportunity to change.

Source: Heard from a rebbe in Gateshead

The latest Pirchei Newsletter contest is designed to make your Pesach festive and fulfilling and memorable. During the weeks leading up to Pesach and beyond, learn at least 45 minutes before, during, or local Pirchei, you receive an extra raffle entry. The contest is open for all ages up to 12th grade. To join the program, please send your weekly email to: shnayimikrahcontest@gmail.com by Monday 2:00 pm. Please include your name, grade, city, state, and contact # and your name will be entered into a drawing for a beautiful set of Socks from Middos!
Rebbe, thank you, but...