חברה לזמדי משנה
The Society for Mishnah Study
Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah

Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah update

Provide eternal merit for those dear to you... through Mishnah study

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ISSUE 2



A Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Miracle

As she walked up the driveway one Monday afternoon, Mrs. Cohen paused at the mailbox and withdrew a stack of envelopes and advertisements, most of which would probably land straight in the trash. Flipping rapidly through the pile, she pulled out a glossy Chinese Auction brochure from Bonei Olam, an organization dedicated to assisting Jewish couples struggling with infertility – an organization that spoke straight to her heart.

As she removed her coat, she glanced quickly through the booklet, when an unusual prize offer caught her eye:

Better Than a Segulah

Harness the unparalleled *zechus* of Torah study for yourself or a loved one. Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's network of Torah scholars will learn the entire Mishnah as a merit (for a speedy recovery, children, a marriage partner, livelihood) for the person of your choice or as a merit for the soul of a dear departed one.

The Cohens had been waiting to be blessed with a child for a number of years already, and the pain and disappointment were a constant presence in their lives.

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The Most Powerful Merit

It's a gift we are able to grant those who have passed on to the Next World. It has the strength to elevate souls, literally raising them from the depths of Gehinom to the portals of Gan Eden – and then ever higher. This is no mystical amulet, but the power of Torah study and its ability to effect extraordinary benefits for the deceased.

After the passing of a loved one, we struggle with the loss of connection, the relationship that we can no longer carry on with the deceased. Indeed, it might seem as if a precious relationship has been severed. But this is not the case, say our sages. There is much we can still do for those whose souls have ascended to the Next World. And first and foremost among these acts is studying Torah on their behalf.

A story is told in the Medrash about Rabbi Zemira'ah, who had an encounter with the soul of a butcher from the Upper Galilee. This man was suffering terrible retribution in the fires of Gehinom for the many sins he had committed during his lifetime. Determined to do something to alleviate the soul's suffering, Rabbi Zemira'ah sought out the man's son, who, like his father, was mired in sin and bereft of Torah knowledge. Taking the young man under his wing, Rabbi Zemira'ah proceeded to teach him until the boy became a great Torah scholar.

a soul so blackened by sin could be raised to such lofty heights

One night, the sinful butcher appeared to Rabbi Zemira'ah in a dream, his countenance glowing. The man explained that as his son had grown in Torah knowledge, his own punishment had abated, until finally, he was actually admitted to Gan Eden, where a throne had been prepared for him. And as the son continued to produce new insights in Torah, the father continued to reap the heavenly benefits. Imagine: a soul so blackened by sin could be raised to such lofty heights through Torah study on its behalf.

Do not make the mistake of thinking

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Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah
40 East Thirteenth Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701



Final Prayers Pamphlet: Granting Peace of Mind at a Most Difficult Time

Kimball Hospital in Lakewood, NJ. It had been a difficult last few months for the Berman family, as they watched their beloved mother slowly slip away from them. Now, on the eve of the Succos holiday, they gathered together in Mrs. Berman's room, knowing all too well that the time had come to say goodbye. Even as they grappled with this difficult life challenge, they found peace in a small placard that one of the children had been given by the hospital chaplain. Included on the fold-out laminated card were all the end-of-life prayers to be said, with clear explanations and step-by-step guidance in how to do so properly.

Days later, one of the Berman grandchildren approached Rabbi Haikins of Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah to comment that this innovative contribution had literally changed the entire set of circumstances from a scene of turmoil and confusion to one of peace and clarity.

Too often, those who find themselves standing by during a loved one's last moments are left at a loss; the knowledge that one has done "the right thing" in end-of-life-situations can be very comforting in the days and weeks following the passing of a loved one. Until recently, however, there has been a marked lack of materials to guide a person in these circumstances.

Once again, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah has stepped in to fill the void. As part of its mission to provide for the needs of the departed through its myriad programs, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah is constantly seeking to improve the provisions available for those who find themselves grappling for meaning at a time of loss. To this end, they have produced an extraordinarily clear and complete list of the requisite prayers and declarations, along with lucid instructions as to what to say when and by whom. The prayers have been carefully laid out on high-quality, glossy cardstock, and were printed under the supervision of Rabbi Yaakov Forchheimer, *halachic* advisor for Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah. Based on the *sefer Gesher Hachayim*, the placard is now available in several versions: Hebrew with English translation and instructions; Hebrew with Hebrew instructions; Hebrew with Yiddish instructions and Yiddish translation of select prayers; and Hebrew with Russian translation and instructions.

organized and easy to follow



The response has been overwhelming. The cards are distributed to hospitals, assisted-living facilities, hospice facilities, *bikur cholim* rooms, chaplains, rabbis, Hatzolah emergency medical technicians and organizations that service Jewish patients, such as Chai Lifeline. Those who used the cards despite being already familiar with the prayers say that they appreciated that everything was organized and easy to follow. And those who were not previously aware of the appropriate prayers found that having the guidance to do the "right thing" was comforting and emotionally fulfilling. The cards have even found their way to a well-known chain of hospices, where the staff uses them to train their chaplains in the appropriate treatment of Jewish clients.

"I just got back from the National Association of Jewish Chaplains conference in Boston. Every single one [of the pamphlets] went. Anticipating this, I only put out half to begin with. After all of them were gone, I put out the rest, and they went equally quickly.

Tizke l'mitzvos," shared Rabbi Daniel Coleman, Chaplain of North Shore University Hospital.

Opportunities for sponsorship of the placards are available. For information contact ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org or call 732-364-7029.

Soul-Stirring Stories: Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's Powerful DVD



A venerated Torah scholar, armed soldiers of the Russian army, suspicious activity and suspected secret collaboration with the enemy German army. All the elements of a fascinating story. And best of all, no figment of the imagination this tale, but an account of substantiated veracity. Who wouldn't want to hear out the details until the story's gripping conclusion?

There is nothing quite so illustrative and compelling as a good story. Add a master storyteller to the equation, and you have a winning combination. Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's website makes the most of both of these elements in presenting visitors to the site with riveting tales of the merits and long-lasting effects of Torah study. Narrated by Rabbi Mayer Erps, renowned for his remarkable ability to bring stories alive, these tales run the gamut from stories of our leaders who naturally recognized the merit of Torah study to simple people from then and now, who discovered this merit for themselves. The story outlined above is just one of the many that can be enjoyed by visitors to the site.

The enclosed DVD allows you to enjoy the stories featured on our website. Take a few moments to be amazed and inspired. Whether you choose to enjoy these narratives all at once or to savor each one, marveling at the true occurrences, this presentation will surely stir your soul and bring you to a greater appreciation of the merits that you too can harness. Once you've enjoyed this taste, visit our website at ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org for more inspiration.



A Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah Miracle *(Continued from page 1)*

Something about this opportunity resonated deeply with Mrs. Cohen. That night, she contacted Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah to hear more about the Better Than a Segulah program. After careful consideration of the options available, Mrs. Cohen decided to sponsor forty days of Mishnah study in the hope that the *zechus* of Torah would stand them in good stead. Following that, the Cohens decided to sponsor another forty-day course of study, this time, for a Talmud study program. In the midst of a new treatment plan, and with the feeling that they surely could not lose, they sponsored several more series of Torah study.

It was in the middle of one of these study programs that Mrs. Cohen gladly contacted the offices of Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah to inform them that she and her husband wanted to change the *zechus* they had originally arranged for: expecting a baby for the first time in many years, she now asked that the learning be a *zechus* for a smooth pregnancy and a healthy baby. At that point, they also chose to sponsor a full year's worth of Talmud study, which extended beyond the time of their baby's birth and *bris*, lasting until he was several months old.

but when all is said and done, if it doesn't 'work,' what is one left with?

In a letter the Cohens sent thanking Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah for their assistance, Mrs. Cohen wrote;

"We wanted to take a moment to thank you for your help in carrying us along our journey and to share our *nachas* and joy with you. May we continue to share *simchahs*."

* * * *

Whether it is good health, a *shidduch*, the blessing of children or financial success that one is seeking, what greater source of *berachah* is there than the eternal source of *berachah* – Torah itself? This is the premise behind Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's unique Better Than a Segulah program. If the merit of Torah learning is so great for those who have passed on, why not harness this power for the benefit of the living?

But there is more. "A *segulah* is wonderful," explains Rabbi Moshe Haikins, Founder and President of Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah, "but when all is said and done, if it doesn't 'work,' what

The Most Powerful Merit

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such events belong to the realm of yesteryear. Throughout the generations, until our time, those of every stripe, from the simplest Jew to the greatest scholar, have been privy to the benefits of Torah study for the souls of the deceased.

Take the story of Anna Preisand and her sister: Upon the passing of her sister, Anna contacted the principal of the local day school and requested that he arrange Mishnah study in her sister's merit. The principal in turn approached Rabbi Perl who agreed to undertake a program of Mishnah study as a merit for Anna's sister.

Sometime later, Anna approached the principal, and looking troubled, asked why the Mishnah study had been stopped. Surprised, the principal spoke to Rabbi Perl.

"How did you know?" the man asked in astonishment. "Lately I've been lax in studying the *mishnayos* for Ms. Preisand."

The principal then asked Rabbi Green to take over the course of study. Each time the principal met Anna, she thanked him from the bottom of her heart, saying, "You don't know how much I owe you."

One day, the principal curiosity got the better of him, and he asked her, "How did you know that the teacher had stopped studying *mishnayos* for your sister? And how are you so sure that it is being completed now?"

Anna replied, "At the time that the Mishnah study was discontinued, my sister appeared to me in a dream. She was dressed in grotesque clothing, and her expression was grim.

"'I depended on you for the Mishnayos,' my sister told me, 'and it's not being done.'

my sister appeared to me in a dream

"After you began the Mishnah study again, my sister again appeared to me in a dream. This time her face was radiant.

"'You have no idea what a comfort this is for me,' my sister said.

"And that is how I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Mishnah is being studied properly in my sister's merit," Anna concluded.

By engaging in acts of Torah study, one can literally change the status and station of a dear departed one. Rest assured that it is even the souls of the very righteous who continue to benefit from the merit of Torah study. The Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva, Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel, *zt"l*, was observing the year of mourning for his father, the Alter of Slabodka, when the Alter appeared to him in a dream and implored him, "Send me packages."

What packages could the Alter desire now that his soul had passed on? Indeed, what could this saintly man possibly need from his lofty place in the next world? The venerable sage was referring to "packages" of Mishnah and Torah study.

The Torah is referred to as Toras Chayim, a living Torah, as it is Torah itself that sustains the world, and it will be through the merit of Torah that the dead will eventually be resurrected in the time of the Redemption. If this is the power of the Torah in this world, one can only imagine the benefits that can be sustained through Torah study in elevating the souls of those who have passed on to the next world, whatever their current positions might be.

Our Sages tell us that the merit of Torah study on behalf of the deceased is even greater than the merit accrued by leading the congregation in prayer on behalf of his loved one. When parents are alive, a child can honor them physically; upon their passing, the child now has a new directive: to honor them spiritually. There is no greater spiritual honor a child can grant his parent than the merit of Torah study.

Grant the eternal merit of Torah to a dear departed one
by sponsoring a program of Mishnah or Gemara study through Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah.
For more information, call 732.364.7029 or visit our website at ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org