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עץ
השדה



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A Tale of
Two Torahs

Chasing
Righteousness

Appointing
a King

RABBI YY JACOBSON
will be in town for Shabbos



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Tzvi Blech: Gabbai



See more Minyanim times on page 7

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and 12 min. before Shkia

NEITZ

S 6:11 | M 6:12 | T 6:13 | W 6:14 | T 6:15 | F 6:16 | SH 6:17

SHEMA- Magen Avraham

S 8:49 | M 8:50 | T 8:51 | W 8:51 | T 8:52 | F 8:52 | SH 8:53

SHEMA- GRA

S 9:35 | M 9:35 | T 9:35 | W 9:36 | T 9:36 | F 9:36 | SH 9:37

TEFILA- GRA

S 10:43 | M 10:43 | T 10:43 | W 10:43 | T 10:43 | F 10:43 | SH 10:44

CHATZOS

S 12:59 | M 12:59 | T 12:58 | W 12:58 | T 12:58 | F 12:58 | SH 12:57

PLAG

S 6:22 | M 6:21 | T 6:20 | W 6:19 | T 6:17 | F 6:16 | SH 6:15

SHKIA

S 7:47 | M 7:46 | T 7:44 | W 7:43 | T 7:41 | F 7:40 | SH 7:38

Shabbos Zmanim

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| CANDLE LIGHTING | 7:32 ^{PM} |
| MINCHA in tent Aleph | 7:00 ^{PM} |
| CHABAD MINCHA | 7:42 ^{PM} |
| SHKIYA | 7:50 ^{PM} |
| SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM: | |
| VASIKIN followed by Daf Yomi Shiur, 20↑ | 5:30 ^{AM} |
| ASHKENAZ, 18 Main | 8:00 ^{AM} |
| TENT ALEPH, Tent κ | 9:15 ^{AM} |
| MINYAN IN OHR CHAIM'S "BAIS CHABAD", 20↑ | 10:00 ^{AM} |
| SHACHRIS, 18 Main | 10:30 ^{AM} |
| PIRCHEI | 2:00 ^{PM} |
| PIRKEI AVOS PEREK VAV | |
| MINCHA FOLLOWED BY SHALOSH SEUDOS | 7:30 ^{PM} |
| SHKIYA | 7:49 ^{PM} |
| MAARIV | 8:29 ^{PM} |
| MAARIV | 8:34 ^{PM} |



Rabbi Lankry *Dear Kehila,*

Haftorah Parashat Shoftim

The *Haftorah* begins with the words of Hashem saying “*Anochi Anochi*, Who comforts you.” Chazal quote (see Yalkut Shimoni 474) Rebbe Abba in the name of Rav Shimon Ben Gamliel explaining the double expression of “*Anochi Anochi*.” They give a *mashol* of a king who became enraged at his queen. He was so annoyed at her that he rejected her and banished her from the palace. After some period of time he reconsidered his actions and desired to reunite with her. He informed her of his intentions to which she consented on the condition that he doubled the amount of her “*kesubah*” (marriage financial agreement).

Chazal conclude that this same situation exists between Hashem and the Jewish people. Hashem established His initial relationship with them when they accepted His Torah. At that time Hashem revealed Himself to His nation and proclaimed, “I am your Hashem.” However, this relationship suffered from much abuse and was eventually terminated. The Jewish people’s behavior was so inexcusable that Hashem reluctantly rejected them and exiled them from Zion. Now, after so many years Hashem is displaying sincere interest in their return. Recognizing their failure during their first relationship, the Jewish nation is doubtful if this second one will be any better. Even after all the magnificent revelations at Sinai they managed to stray and forfeit their relationship. What would ensure that things would be any different this time? Hashem responds that He would increase His revelations which would guarantee an everlasting relationship with His people. The double expression of “*Anochi Anochi*” stands for the double *ketuba* that Hashem will offer.

This Chazal is very difficult to understand. Firstly, it is not completely accurate; Hashem did not banish us from the palace, He had the palace burnt to the ground. Next, in the *mashol* we see some time passes and the king reconsidered his actions, yet with Hashem, it is really a very long time, and it is not over yet. We are still waiting in *galus*! But the biggest inconsistency is that the *mashol* illustrates the queen as a victim whereas it was us, the Jewish nation, that violated the agreement. We were not helpless victims but the cause for the destruction. How can we deserve not only to return to the palace, but receive a double *ketuba* as well? A *ketuba* is a privilege for a wife when she acts in accordance to her obligations. If a wife violates the conditions of marriage she loses her *ketuba*. Yet here we see we can ask for double when Hashem is kind enough to take us back? What is the meaning of this Chazal?

I believe this is an incredible lesson in the process of creating peace. It is the responsibility of the greater person or Being to accept the blame in order to push forward and rebuild. Even if one is in the right and taking responsibility will cost double, a real relationship with tranquility is worth it. Let the past be the past; forgive, forget and rebuild. We expend much energy on proving how we were wronged that we are left too exhausted to repair the relationship. Although Hashem was always there for us and we sinned against Him again and again, He is willing to look past our disloyalties. Hashem is willing to take us back and pay double for the sake of a tranquil and loving relationship.

At the end of *Shemona Esrei*, we take three steps back and say “the maker of peace in the elevated world, He should make peace on us and upon his entire nation Yisrael.” Clearly, peace is a creation, and we therefore request that Hashem create it upon us. However, in order for peace to exist, we need to be willing to take three steps backwards.

May we all pursue lives of peace at all costs and enjoy the tranquility it brings. Amen.



ELUL AND THE SEVEN CONDITIONS OF BITACHON

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

The Arizal explains that there are seven gates which have been positioned in our body to stand judgement over our physical and spiritual well-being. These openings are our two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and our mouth. These apertures are very powerful sources that can either cause great harm or wonderful positive spiritual effects in the world. And therefore just like physical gates which we use to guard our cities, we need judges that make decisions as to what is right and wrong. In addition, there is a need for a responsible person to ensure that each decision and judgement is upheld.

These concepts apply to our spiritual gates as well, which embrace many important choices in our lives: What we are permitted or forbidden to say; how we can improve our prayers to make them powerful and piercing; what we should be listening to; which odors are acceptable to smell and of course what we should allow our eyes to see, and what should be avoided.

The Arizal’s words are a powerful introduction to Chodesh Elul which usually coincides with Parshat Shoftim. Elul is a very serious time and many mussar sefarim try to inspire us to work hard to fulfill the mitzvah of teshuva. However, there is a very important step which must be taken that precedes our efforts to “return.” We must ask ourselves, “Why should I care so much? Is it because I fear being punished and suffering for eternity?” While that way of thinking can certainly motivate a person and can have positive results, it obviously is not the correct way to reflect. We find the true significance in the word Elul which stands for *ani ledodi vedodi li*.

A dear *talmid* of mine, Shlomo Rosenfeld, told me a beautiful thought about this acronym. The Midrash says about the pasuk “*hashivienu hashem elecha venashuva*.” The Jewish people inform Hashem, “Look, we want to return to you but you make the first move.” Hashem, however, says the opposite: “*Shuva Yisrael* - you return first, Klal Yisrael.” The text doesn’t seem to tell us who won the argument. Maybe Elul is the answer. We realize that we need to make the first step. Hashem shows us his love after Tisha B’Av starting with *Shabbas Nachamu*. Then we in turn agree to take the first step. And this is the deeper message of *ani ledodi*—I am to my beloved; I realize how important and worthwhile it is to take the first step. This interpretation gave me a better appreciation of the word Elul.

We should add that the goal of Elul – and essentially all of Judaism – is to get closer to Hashem and have a true relationship with Him. It is admirable to accept a subconscious idea that there is ‘Hashem’ but it’s a whole different world when we work at this belief and take actions that reflect our deep desire to create this relationship. This idea connects perfectly to the seven conditions of bitachon which are beautifully expanded on in the famous work of *Chovos Halevavos*.

The more I think about it the more I realize the extent to which the seven conditions play a major role in the process of *teshuva*. The explanation is extensive and is too lengthy for this article but we can discuss briefly the first and second of the seven conditions-- Hashem loves us. Without accepting this premise, it is very difficult to step forward and do *teshuva*. Who would want to ‘return’ to someone that doesn’t really love them? The second condition is that He listens to every word we say; He knows exactly what we need. Indeed, if I know that He loves me, is paying attention to my actions and even looks forward to my prayers than wow it make me want to return to Him.

These examples illustrate how vital the seven conditions are, and will give you a good starting lift of inspiration to send you on your way to return to Hashem.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

Teruah: 3 Sounds or 9?

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



As we begin to blow shofar during Chodesh Elul in preparation for Rosh Hashanah, it is an opportune time to begin discussing some of the rules and regulations of tekias shofar.

The Mishna states that a tekiah is equivalent to the length of a teruah, which is three yevavos. How long is the sound of a yevavah? This is a machlokes between Rashi and Tosfos. Rashi's opinion is that a yevavah is one small sound, which means that a teruah is three short sounds. According to Tosfos, a yevavah is the equivalent of three small sounds, which means that a teruah will need to be nine short sounds. Thus, there is a machlokes whether a teruah consists of three short sounds or nine short sounds.

According to Rashi it is enough to blow three short sounds and according to Tosfos one must blow nine short sounds. The length of the tekiah will also depend on this machlokes. According to Rashi it is enough to blow the tekiah which is the length of three short sounds, whereas according to Tosfos one must blow the length of nine short sounds. It is important to point out that the tekiah – both at the beginning of each set, as well as the end of each set – has to be as long as the teruah of that specific set and it will depend on each specific set. In other words, the tekiah of the set of tsh"t has to be as long as the shevarim, the tekiah of the set of tr"t has to be as long as the teruah and the tekiah of the shevarimteruah has to be as long as the shevarim-teruah, which is obviously twice as long.

A longer tekiah or teruah

However, all agree that this is just the minimum and both the tekiah can be longer and the teruah can be made up of more short sounds. Therefore, when we blow a long tekiah or teruah, we are fulfilling the mitzvah according to both – even according to Rashi, since the length of three sounds is only a minimum and blowing longer is also a fulfillment of the mitzvah. On the other hand, if one blows a tekiah or teruah less than the length of nine sounds he will not fulfill the mitzvah, according to Tosfos.

But it is worth noting that although the tekiah can be as long as you want, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach recommended that one not blow longer than necessary, to ensure that the tekiah doesn't change pitch in the middle.

This is based on the chumra of Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l, who held that the sound of the tekiah must be completely straight, without even a change of pitch midstream. The reason for this is based on the expression "וְהַעֲבִירָהּ" used by the Torah for the tekiah, which has the connotation of being a completely straight sound, without any changes midstream. Although Rav Shlomo Zalman maintained that we pasken that one does not need to be concerned with a change of pitch, it is still better to avoid the issue. Therefore, one should not blow tekios longer than necessary, since when blowing a long tekiah it will often change pitch in the middle. There is another interesting question in the acharonim: if one blew a longer teruah – more than nine little sounds – does that require one

to blow a longer tekiah, as well. In other words, the question is if the tekiah has to be as long as the length of the teruah, in general, or if it depends on each person's teruah that he blew.

The Yaavetz and the Sfas Emes rule that it depends on each person's teruah and if one blew a longer teruah he will be required to blow a longer tekiah. However, the poskim do not seem to be concerned with this.

In summary

There is a machlokes between Rashi and Tosfos as to what is the correct length of a tekiah and a teruah. This is only as far as the minimum, but all agree that one can blow as long as he likes, and there is no maximum.

There is a kuntres of shiurim on the topic of tekias shofar available. If you would like a copy of any of these shiurim, or for any comments and questions, please send an email to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com, or call 845 372 6618.

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

CELL: 845-499-6354



Rabbi Scheiner

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A Tale of Two Torahs: The Timeless and the Timely



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Every Jew is obligated to write a Torah Scroll (Sefer Torah). If so, why does the Torah give a separate mitzvah in *Parshas Shoftim* for a king to do so?

The Talmud explains that the Torah is instructing the Jewish leader to write not one, but two Torah Scrolls. One travels with him wherever he goes, and one remains permanently at home, in his private treasury.

But why? What's the point of the king having two Sifrei Torah?

Timeless and Timely

There is, perhaps, a profound message here. The Leader must hold on to two Torahs, as it were. One remains in his treasure chest; the other travels with him wherever he goes, in the words of the Mishnah: "He goes to battle, and it goes with him; he enters the palace and it enters with him; he sits in judgement, and it sits with him. He sits down to eat, and the Torah is there with him."

There are two elements to Torah: On one hand Torah represents the unwavering truth that remains unchangeable, unbendable, un-phased by the flux of time, space and history. Shabbos never changes. *teffilin, matzah, shofar, sukkah, mikvah, mezuzah*, the text of Torah, the *bris milah*—these are eternal, unchangeable, Divine laws and truths. The same delicious or horrible "stale" matzah we ate 3300 years ago in the desert we still eat in the 21st century in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles. The same ram's horn we blew two millennia ago is still blown today the world over. The same *tzitzis*, the same Shabbos, the same Yom Kippur, the same kosher laws, the same conversion laws, the same Torah.

But there is another element to Torah—its ability to give perspective and guidance to each generation according to its unique needs, challenges, struggles and experiences. Each

generation is different. The issues that plagues us a half century ago are the not the issues we confront today, and conversely: today we have dilemmas never experienced before in history. Our bodies, psyches, souls, sensitivities, and environments are different. Our world has changed in significant ways. Torah must also be a blueprint and luminary to the unique journeys of each milieu, to the climate of each generation, to the ambiance of every era, to the sensitivities of each age, to the yearnings of every epoch.

A Jewish leader – and every one of us is a leader in our own individual way – must have two Torahs. One Torah remains immune to change. One pristine Torah Scroll never leaves the ivory tower of the king's treasury house. It speaks of truths of life and of G-d that are timeless. It transcends borders of time, geography, and people.

This is the error some make with Torah. You can't just keep on adjusting Torah to your predefined positions and desires. If Torah is truth, it is true in all times and in all places. If it is not true, who needs it all together?

But it is not enough to just teach a timeless Torah. a leader must also find in Torah the language of Hashem to this particular generation, to this individual person, to this unique situation, to this singular struggle, to this mindset and weltanschauung. Torah has the capacity to speak to the timely as much as to the timeless, to the modern as much as to the ancient, to the future as much as to the past, to the things that are always in flux as much as to those that remain unchangeable.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:45am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



ELUL: ANI LEDODI VEDODI LI [Shir Hashirim 6:3]

Regarding the four phrases] whose first letters form an acronym for the name Elul, as cited in the writings of the *AriZal* and in texts of *Mussar* :

In general, this month is a month of stocktaking and preparation for Teshuvah... This is intimated by the verse: " *Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li* — I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." [Shlomo Hamelech is alluding to our relationship with Hashem.]

This is expressed specifically through the daily service of giving a coin to charity and then praying, then "proceeding from the synagogue to the house of study." [Gemilas chasodim – Tefilah\Avodah – Torah.] These three daily services are alluded to, by the Three remaining Acronyms of "ELUL." Acronyms of Elul To be continued

— Based on Rebbe's letter written 27 Av 5709 - 1949

Chase Righteousness Away

“צדק צדק תרדף, למען תחיה וירשת את הארץ אשר ד' אלקיך נתן לך” 16:20

“Righteousness, righteousness shall you pursue, so that you will live and possess the Land that Hashem, your G-d, gives to you.”

Why does the Torah use a double *loshon* of “צדק”? The *loshon* of “תרדף” is a *loshon* of chasing after for the purpose of eliminating or harming the subject. *Bereishis* 44:4 “קום רדף” “אחרי האנשים, והשגתם ואמרת אלהם למה שלמתם רעה תחת טובה” – “Get up, chase after the men; when you overtake them, you are to say to them, ‘Why do you repay evil for good?’” It seems that *posuk* is telling us that we should treat righteousness as our antagonist. What is the Torah teaching us by using this *loshon*?

One must chase righteousness through righteousness. The end does not justify the means. One may have thought that as long as he ultimately achieves that which is righteous, he can act without righteousness in his pursuit. The Torah tells us a double *loshon* of righteousness, that one’s actions in pursuit of righteousness must also be righteous. (טורי זהב)

צדק says that we learn from the double *loshon* of “צדק צדק” that one must be righteous in his actions and with his words.

Another *p’shat* is that there is indeed a righteousness that should be chased away, and that is one’s own sense of righteousness.

Vayikra 18:5 – “וחי בהם, אני ד’” – “He shall live by them (the *Mitzvos*), I am Hashem.” The nature of *Mitzvos* is to give life. The *posuk* is teaching us that although the *mitzvos* are the actual lifeline of a person, one should only perform the *Mitzvos* because Hashem commanded him. This is the thought process one should have while making a *Brocha*. We say, “אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו...” – it *should* be understood as – “Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, the King of the world, who made us *kodosh* with His *mitzvos*; ‘וצונו’ – however, I am now going to perform this *mitzvah* for You commanded me to. We must perform *mitzvos* because it is Hashem’s *ratzon*, and not because it is our lifeline, and is *mekadesh* us. (אדרת אליהו)

Every individual has an innate sense of what he considers to be righteous. What one may firmly believe to be righteous is not necessarily righteous to *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. The first “צדק” in the *posuk* tells us that we must be righteous within the parameters of what *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* says is righteous. The second “צדק” we need to be *Rodef*; we need to be antagonistic towards it. This refers to our innate judgment of what we consider to be righteous. We must eradicate it from our thoughts. We must perform all *mitzvos*, for one reason only, “וצונו”, because Hashem commanded us. In the *zechus* that our actions are truly *lshem shomayim*, “וירשת את הארץ אשר ד’ אלקיך נתן לך” – we will be *zoche* to live and possess the Land that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, our G-d, gave us.

Starting Anew

In the olden days, they judged whether a person was fit to go back to society or if he was a candidate to remain in the ersatz “mental facility” or crazy house in the following way: They brought the patient into a room with a muddied bathtub and a cup, a spoon, a fork and a bucket. If he used the bucket to empty the tub, he was still lacking in cognisant ability. If he pulled the plug and emptied the filthy water, home he went!

In our mission as Jews, we try as much as we can, to cleanse ourselves well at the end of every year. It’s no coincidence that Parshas Shoftim arrives with Elul year in and year out.

“Shoftim VeShotrim Teetain...” — stand guard lest foreign influences penetrate the gates of your city. This idea was made to be understood on many levels. Our eyes, ears and mouths must be carefully guarded lest we lose the battle to our most formidable foe, the Yetzer Harah. The yetzer, the inclination to stray, is working overtime. We have 40 days, from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Yom Kippur, to attempt to fight the battle.

But unfortunately many of us produce a change in our lives for a short period of time, until we pass the “finish line” of Yom Kippur. Real change is life altering. It means looking inwards to identify the source of our pain, our struggles. Not an easy job, but we must try.

Let’s begin by turning off facebook, instagram, twitter as a mode of communication and trying to connect using a more

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



advanced mode of communication: An ancient device called the Soul. We instinctively know what to correct — but we need to calm the static in our mind to see it and feel it.

When something breaks, we think, replace or repair? When it is dear to us or one of a kind, we repair. The Jewish soul is both eternal and different, hence we “fix” ourselves in order to preserve our divine potential.

Elul’s sign, Besulah (Virgo, the unblemished soul), holds the power for us to begin anew, free of blemish, as if just created. We long to come closer to Hashem, to feel connected, feel the love of our spouse and our children, to engage the true friendship of our neighbors and to fulfill the will of our creator by learning His holy Torah with sweetness, each one of us.

The answer; Teshuvah Mei’Ahava. Changing our ways because we love and cherish our relationship with Hashem. In the post-holocaust generations we have all been affected by pain, whether mechanchim, parents or life pressure; love of ourselves, of others and of our Creator, remains the preferred path. Opening our sealed hearts will clean up old behaviors (let those muddied waters out). Feel Hashem’s presence each day— everything that happens is for the good; thank Him for every step we take.

Kol Dodi Dofek, The Shechinah is knocking at our windows, let Him in.



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2:00 | 2:15 | 2:30 | 2:45 | 3:00 | 3:15

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5:00

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Appointing a King

Rabbi A. Twersky



When you come to the Land that God gives you... and you will say, "I will set a king over myself"... ;You shall surely set a king over yourself (Deut. 17:14-15).

Inasmuch as appointing a king is a mitzvah, why did Samuel rebuke the Israelites sharply when they requested a king (I Samuel 8:5)?

The commentaries have given a number of answers to this question. Perhaps the most satisfying is that of the Klei Yakar, who directs our attention to a subtle nuance in the verses of Deuteronomy and Samuel.

It is a mitzvah to appoint a king when the intention is, "I will set a king over myself," i.e., when one is willing to subordinate oneself to the king's rule and accept his authority. Close attention to the request of the Israelites of the Prophet Samuel show that they requested, "Give unto us a king," not a king over us whom we will obey, but rather a king unto us who will cater to our wishes. It was this request that angered the prophet.

A term frequently used to refer to a rabbi is "spiritual leader." Alas! Not infrequently, the rabbi is a spiritual follower rather than leader.

Rabbi Yisroel of Salant commented on the Talmud that describes the sorry state of affairs that will prevail before the Ultimate Redemption, among them, "the face, i.e., the leaders, of the generation will be similar to dogs" (Sanhedrin 97a). He said that a dog often runs ahead of its master, but then looks back to see whether the master has turned the corner. If he sees that the master has veered off in another direction, he runs back to follow him.

"That is how the leaders will be before the Ultimate Redemption," Rabbi Yisroel said. "They may give the appearance of leading the community, but like a dog watching its master, they turn around to see which way the community is heading, and they follow them."

We must accept authentic leadership and defer to authority, rather than expect our leaders to follow us.



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Rabbi Avigdor Miller on... WHY DID HASHEM PUT YOU IN THE WORLD?

We came into this world for a short time. We're here for a purpose and the purpose is to make out of ourselves the very best that we are able.

In order to do that, Hashem is going to send to each one of us a whole list of opportunities, and each opportunity is going to give us a different kind of perfection.

If we'll make use of each opportunity in its way, when it comes, and we'll be successful in all of them, then we shall have lived successfully.

— *Living with Others #R-4 (simchashachaim.com)*

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“Kosher Style”

Rabbi Herschel Schachter



Years ago, there used to be restaurants which would advertise that they were "kosher style". That meant that the food was not kosher at all but rather kosher "style". Bnei Torah realized that that is a farce. The laws of the Torah are very detailed and if one of the necessary conditions for kashrus is missing, it does not help that it is "kosher style"; it is absolutely not kosher.

The same is true in all areas of halacha. Halacha is very detailed and very complicated. Many non-observant Jews raise a question, "do you really think that G-d is so pedantic that He really cares about all of those intricate details?" Rav Soloveitchik zt"l once pointed out that the same G-d that gave the Torah also created all living creatures in the world. The DNA of a simple butterfly is extremely complicated. The same G-d who came up with the idea about complicated DNA also came up with all of the halachos, including all of their complicated details.

Every so often, Jewish folklore takes over a certain halacha and succeeds in totally distorting it, sometimes l'chumra and sometimes l'kula. The Torah tells us (Devarim 17:11) that when the rabbonim issue a psak, one is not permitted to ignore that psak by either going to the right or to the left - "לא תסור מן הדבר". "אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל". Some of the commentaries interpret that going to the right means l'chumra, that one feels that the rabbonim were too lenient; and going to the left means l'kula, that one feels that the rabbis were too stringent in their psak.

Over the years, folklore has taken over the laws of mesirah and misrepresented this halacha as if it implies that no Jewish criminals may be given over to the police. Those who follow the Daf Yomi have been learning the Gemorah Gittin the last three months. In the first perek in Gittin (7a), the Gemorah makes it clear that sometimes mesirah is permissible and even required. If one is a public menace, or one is harming other people, it is clear from the Shulchan Aruch and all of the classical poskim that there is no prohibition of mesirah and because the Jewish community in chutz la'aretz has no beis din which can take care of the matter, we have no choice other than to report the individual to the governmental authorities. Just the other day, I read a beautiful essay on this topic in a sefer called shu"t Ishei Yisroel (volume 6 page 522), by Rabbi Aschi Dick (a young talmid chacham who gives shiurim in the OU center in Jerusalem) which quotes all of the sources that indicate clearly that the prohibition of mesirah definitely does not apply in such a situation.

Let us not fall in to the "kosher style" attitude that used to be so prevalent in the area of kashrus years ago. All the details of every halacha are significant, folklore notwithstanding.



Shoftim: Humble before God and Man

Rabbi David Sutton

One of the sources for humility is in this week's Parasha (chapter 17) where we tell the king not to become a haughty towards his brethren. לבלתי רום לבבו מאחיו

The Ramban says this is a source for the sin of arrogance; if the Torah tells the king (who, so to say, has a right to be arrogant, because he's the leader) not to be arrogant, surely other people should not be arrogant.

He goes on to say that Only God deserves greatness and uplifting, and only He should be praised.

But there's another source in the Torah for avoiding arrogance (chapter 8, 11- 14), where it says, Be careful lest you forget Hashem your God and become arrogant So if it says you're not allowed to be arrogant, in a clear pasuk referring to arrogance in general, why mention this prohibition in the parsha of the king?

The Sfat Emet in Parashat Ekev answers that the first pasuk is saying, "Don't be arrogant towards God. Don't forget about God." So fine. That's one thing. "I'm not going to be arrogant towards God. I realize God's in charge. I'll humble myself. I'll bow in the Amida. I'll give Him the credit."

But there is another type of arrogance – arrogance towards people, and that's a whole separate story. "I might humble myself before God, but that doesn't mean I'm going to humble myself before people."

There's a story told by the Sfat Emet, (possibly in jest), about a rabbi who was saying vidui - ashamnu, bagadnu etc" and crying bitterly. The gabbai saw him and thought, "Wow, I thought this rabbi was a big tzaddik. But look how he's crying when he says that he laughed and made fun of people. And I thought he was a good guy..."

And so the gabbai decided not to give the rabbi Shishi that week, or the week after. Eventually the rabbi starts to wonder what's going on, and asks the gabbai about it. The gabbai answered, "Well, I saw the way you were crying in vidui, and realized that you're not such a tzaddik after all."

The rabbi said, "No, I was crying to God; and when it comes to God, I'm a nobody. But as far as the rest of the congregation, I deserve shishi, I'm better than they are!"

Of course, whether this really happened or not, the message is that sometimes we humble ourselves before God, but we don't humble ourselves before other people.

We must be humble both in the eyes of God and the eyes of people. Therefore, we need two separate pesukim, to teach us that when we look at somebody else, not to think of our success (and maybe his lack of success), or that we're smarter than him, we're wealthier than him, etc. As the Ramban says, if anything, we should think the opposite. If you're smarter than him, and you know more, then you're more guilty than he is, because when he sins, it's by mistake. When you do it, it's on purpose.

And that's why there is a double warning not to be arrogant, not towards God, and not towards people.

Every Life is Precious



Rav Yissachar Frand

A murder victim is found in a field out in the open country between two cities. There are no witnesses and no clues to the identity of his assailant. The Torah demands an exact measurement to determine the closest city. The elders of that city have to declare, "We were not derelict in our responsibilities to this traveler. Our hands did not spill this innocent blood." Then they go through a process of atonement called the eglah arufah, the decapitated calf.

These laws seem to be incongruously wedged in between two chapters that talk about going out to war. What is it doing there?

Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman, my Rosh Yeshivah, explains that the Torah is teaching us a lesson. In times of war, life becomes incredibly cheap. People are dying left and right, men, women, children, soldiers, civilians. Life somehow loses its value.

Therefore, right in the middle of the discussion of war, the Torah interrupts to present the laws of eglah arufah, laws that underscore the extreme preciousness of each individual life. An entire city must bring atonement for the loss of one unidentified person who may or may not have passed through unnoticed.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, the rav of Brisk, once called a special meeting in the shul. "My dear friends, we have a serious problem. The Czar's police have arrested a young Jewish boy."

"What did he do?" asked a congregant.

"He burned the Czar in effigy."

The man slapped his forehead in frustration.

"Regardless of what he has done," Rav Chaim continued,

"the boy is in danger. We must get him out immediately. It is a question of money. Just money."

"How much money?"

Rav Chaim mentioned the sum. It was an exorbitant amount, and people gasped audibly.

"We are faced with a great mitzvah," said Rav Chaim. "This is true pidyon shevuyim, ransoming captives."

"Who is the boy?" one man wanted to know. "Is he a yeshivah boy?"

"No," said Rav Chaim.

"Is he a member of our shul? Is he someone we know?"

"No."

"Is he religious?"

"I'm afraid not. At least not yet."

One of the men threw up his hands in frustration. "How will we raise money for a boy like that? And such a large sum!"

"I don't know," Reb Chaim said, "but somehow it must be done. I am not coming to shul on Yom Kippur until the money is collected."

Time passed, and only a small amount of money was raised. Yom Kippur came. It was time for Kol Nidrei, and Rav Chaim still had not come to shul. The elders of the community went to his house.

"I told you," he said. "I am not coming until you raise the money. It doesn't matter if the boy is religious or not. A Jewish soul is a Jewish soul!"

The community raised the money to ransom the boy.

Every life is precious.

פרשה גדלחנקן דורק ר' יוסף רובינשטיין

בשעת די סעודה, ווען אלע פארזאמעלטע האבן נאך פראגע צייכענס פון דעם פלוצים'דיגע אומערווארטעטע סעודה, נעמט רבי העשיל ארויס פון קעשענע דאס געלט וואס ער האט נארוואס געקריגן פונעם גביר און הויבט עס אן ציילן. ער ציילט דאס איינ-מאל, נאכאמאל און דאן א דריטע מאל, דערווייל זיצן אלע ארום די שיי-געדעקטע טישן און א צעמישעניש איז קענטיג אויף די פארק-נייטשטע שטערענעס 'וואס גייט דא פאר?' פרעגן זייער בליקן מיט נייגער און וואונדער.

עס ווערט זאפארט שטיל ווען דער רב מאכט מיט די האנט, אלע ווילן הערן וואס ער האט צו ערקלערן, און ער הויבט אן: "געטרייע קינדער, צו זעט עטס די געלט? אט די געלט איז שוחד געלט!" און דערציילט איר קורצע היסטאריע.

"בכוונה האב איך אייך אלע פארזאמעלט דא, כדי איר זאלט מיט די אייגענע אויגן זען וואס שוחד געלט איז, און אצינד טו איך אייך בעטן און ווארענען; לויפט אוועק דערפון ווי פון פייער!"

גלייך דערנאך האט דער רבי געשיקט רופן דעם גביר, און ווי נאר ער איז אריינגעקומען אין צימער האט אים דער גאון גלייך געלאזט הערן קאלטס און ווארענס, ווי אויך אהינגעגעבן דאס גאנצע געלט, און דאן שארף פארגעהאלטן היתכן אזוי פרעך עובר זיין א לאו אין די תורה!

לא תטה משפט וגו' ולא תקח שחד כי השחד יעור עיני חק-מים ויסלף דברי צדיקים. (טז, יט)

ווען דער רבי ר' העשיל זי"ע איז געווען רב אין קראקע, האט זיך צווישן צוויי פון די גרעסטע עשירים אין שטאט אנטוויקעלט א סכסוך אין די ווערדן פון גאר גרויסע געלטער, און זיי זענען געקומען צו אים פאר א דין תורה.

איז געווען איינער פון זיי א געריבענער באנדיט און בעפאר דעם דין תורה איז ער ארויף צום רב אין שטוב זיך 'דורכשמועסן': "רבי, וויבאלד מיר האבן ביי אייך א דין תורה אין עטליכע טעג ארום, גאר קאמפליצירט און פארפלאנטערט, בעט איך פון רבי'ן זאל זיך אנשטרענגען אז בלויז דער אמת זאל ארויסשיינען פון דעם קריגעריי..." זאגנדיג דאס נעמט ער פון טאש ארויס הונדערט דינער און גליטשט עס ארויף אויפן טיש.

דער גאון זאגט נישט קיין ווארט, נעמט דאס געלט, און בעט פון דעם גביר זאל צוריק-קומען צומארגנס.

ווי נאר דער גביר איז ארויס פון רב'ס שטוב, פארלאנגט ער פון די רעביצין ארויסנעמען די טעפ אין קאך און צוגרייטן א מאָל-צייט, ווייל ער האט בדעה איינלאדענען די קינדער און אייניקל-ער צו א גרויסע מסיבה.

DAMAGE CONTROL



Nesanel Yoel Safran

We shouldn't destroy, deface, damage or waste things for no good reason. In this week's Torah portion (Deut. 20: 19) we see how even an army in the middle of a war, when there's destruction all around, should be careful not to wantonly destroy fruit trees that can bring benefit to the world. The Torah way is not to needlessly ruin property – even our own.

In our story, a kid gets a wakeup on what it is to waste.

Cindy, the assistant counselor, was doing her usual evening rounds when she was startled by some crashing sounds. She turned to see one of the campers flinging things off 'Peak's Cliff' – what the campers had nicknamed the sharp drop-off into the rocky ravine below the hillside campgrounds.

"Hey, stop that!" Cindy shouted.

The kid looked her way.

"You're destroying camp property!" Cindy went on. The kid threw her head back and let out a loud, rolling laugh. "That's what *you* think," she said. "All this stuff I'm trashin' is mine."

By now Cindy had moved closer and saw that the kid had a big pile of stuff next to her, and craning her head, she could see an almost just-as-big pile on the valley floor. "Okay ... even if *it* is yours, why are just ruining all that stuff?"

"It's fun to watch it smash – see?" the kid giggled as she flung a couple of CD disks like Frisbees into the stony chasm below.

"But don't you need your things?" Cindy asked, alarmed.

"Nah!" the kid laughed. "Camp's over in just two more days and I don't feel like lugging all my stuff home with me – besides, I've got newer, better stuff back at home," she said, swinging her hair dryer by the cord like a cowboy's lasso and letting it fly with a whoop.

"Stop ... you can't do that!" Cindy cried out.

"Why not? Like I said ... the stuff is *mine*." The kid snapped her bubblegum for emphasis.

"Even so, who says you can pollute like that? Besides, there are a lot of better things to do with things you don't want."

"Like what?" the girl asked as she shot a pair of swimming goggles by their rubber head-strap like a

slingshot out and over the rocks. Then she grabbed a few more CD disks and, without looking at them, began to swing them back and forth like a discus thrower winding up.

"Well ... like give the stuff away to people who could use it," Cindy said. "I know that camp down the road for underprivileged kids would gladly take most of your stuff – I'll even bring it there myself if you want me to."

"I dunno..."

"Or at least sell it or something, but just to waste and destroy perfectly good property is, like wrong, you know?"

"Mmm ... maybe," the girl said, for the first time looking like she was taking Cindy seriously. "I guess you can try to give away the rest of this stuff to those needy kids if you want. But first," she winked, "I'm just going to give these disks and a couple of other stuff a final fling."

"But why?" Cindy asked.

"Just 'cuz," the kid said. "Besides, who would even want these?" she held the disks up to her face, and blanched. "O'm'gosh! I can't believe I almost did that. These are all my original software discs – I must have taken them by mistake. If I threw these out, my dad would ... oh, boy! Y'know what? I am done trashing things – you're right, it's dumb – you need some help carting this stuff to those kids who could use it for something good?"

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JOKES

Conversation

Police: Knock Knock
 Me: Who's there?
 Police: The Police
 Me: What do you want?
 Police: To talk
 Me: How many are you
 Police: Two
 Me: Talk to each other

you that in this town we are plagued by thieves. Scarcely a day passes without one our citizens coming to me bemoaning the fact that his house has been broken into. On the other hand, I have noticed that thieves do not bother you Jews nearly as much."
 "Chief, you are correct."
 "Yes, but why is that?"
 "Look at this little box here on the side of my doorpost" said the Rabbi.
 "It's called a mezuzah. We Jews believe that when we put a mezuzah on the entrances to our houses, the Holy One, may His Name be blessed, protects both us and our property."
 "In that case", replied the Chief, "If you can I must have one, Of course keep this conversation under your yarmulka!"



Impressionist Art

Recently someone nearly got away with stealing several paintings from the Louvre. However, after planning the crime, breaking in, evading security, getting out, and escaping with the goods, he was captured only two blocks away when his van ran out of gas. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such a foolish error, he replied, "I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

Student Talking to the Wise Man

"Sir, What is the secret of your success?"
 "Two words"
 "And, Sir, what are they?"
 "Right decisions."
 "And how do you make right decisions?"
 "One word."
 "And, What is that?"
 "Experience."
 "And how do you get Experience?"
 "Two words"
 "And, Sir, what are they?"
 "Wrong decisions."

Police Assistance

Opening his front door, the Rabbi found himself face to face with the local Chief of Police. "Rabbi, may I have a few words with you?" asked the Chief.
 "Of course, Chief," replied the Rabbi somewhat nervously.
 "Rabbi," began the Chief, "It must be evident to

Not wishing to be the cause of a problem with Law Enforcement, the Rabbi reluctantly handed over a mezuzah to the Chief.
 Some two weeks later the Rabbi was awakened by the sound of someone pounding violently on his door.
 Dressing himself hastily, he made his way down the stairs. "Who's there?" the Rabbi asked tremulously.
 "Open the door! Open the door!" screamed a voice on the other side.
 Leaving the door on the latch, the Rabbi cracked the door wide enough to see the Chief standing in front of him, his eyes wild with great distraught.
 "What happened?" asked the terrified Rabbi,
 "Robbers?"
 "No, even worse!" screamed the Chief,
 "Schnorrers!"



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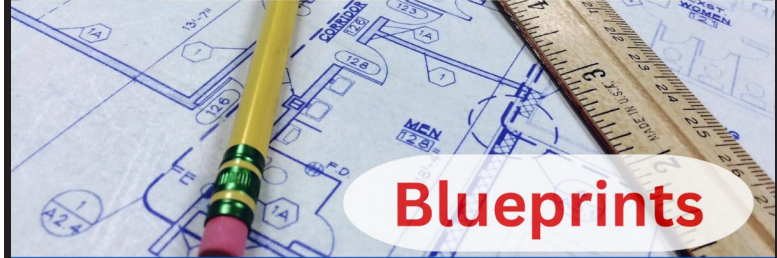
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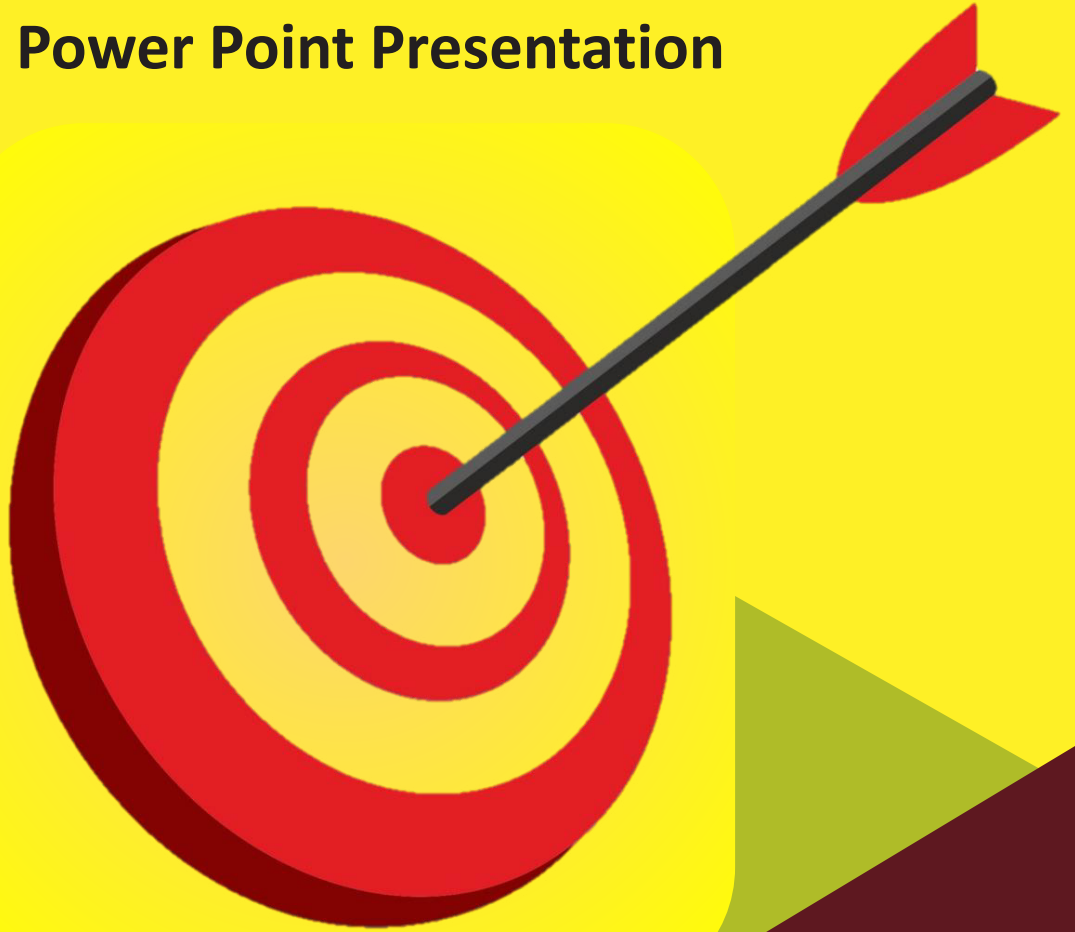
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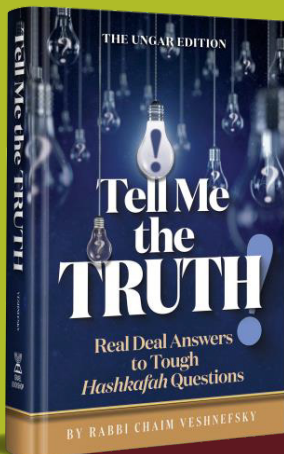
A Power Point Presentation



**Sunday,
August 27th
10:00 AM
Ohr Chaim
18 Forshay Rd
Monsey, NY**

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*Presented by
International lecturer and author
Rabbi Chaim Veshnefsky
Director, Yesodei Hadas*

