

Ki Setze | Elul 7 - 13 | August 24 - 30



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Inside:

**HaRav Gershon
Edelstein
on Teshuva**

**Remember Amalek,
Remember Shabbos**

שלח תשלח את האם
ואת הבנים תקח לך
למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים



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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 6:18 | M 6:19 | T 6:20 | W 6:21 | T 6:22 | F 6:23 | SH 6:24

SHEMA- Magen Avraham

S 8:53 | M 8:54 | T 8:54 | W 8:55 | T 8:55 | F 8:56 | SH 8:56

SHEMA- GRA

S 9:37 | M 9:37 | T 9:38 | W 9:38 | T 9:38 | F 9:39 | SH 9:39

TEFILA- GRA

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

CHATZOS

S 12:57 | M 12:57 | T 12:56 | W 12:56 | T 12:56 | F 12:55 | SH 12:55

PLAG

S 6:13 | M 6:12 | T 6:11 | W 6:09 | T 6:08 | F 6:07 | SH 6:05

SHKIA

S 7:37 | M 7:35 | T 7:34 | W 7:32 | T 7:30 | F 7:29 | SH 7:27

Shabbos Zmanim

CANDLE LIGHTING	7:22 ^{PM}
MINCHA in tent Aleph	7:00 ^{PM}
CHABAD MINCHA	7:32 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	7:40 ^{PM}
SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:	
VASIKIN followed by Daf Yomi Shiur, 20↑	5:37 ^{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}
<hr/>	
PIRCHEI	2:00 ^{PM}
PIRKEI AVOS PEREK ALEF and BAIS	
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY SHALOSH SEUDOS	7:20 ^{PM}
SHKIYA	7:38 ^{PM}
MAARIV	8:18 ^{PM}
MAARIV	8:23 ^{PM}



Parashat Ki Seitzei Haftorah

“Rejoice barren city who never expected such an overwhelming influx within your walls...Extend your annexes without interruption...Because your children will inherit the cities of the nations, and settle the desolate areas.” (54:1-3).

The proportions of the Jewish redemption will be so overwhelming that Eretz Yisroel won't be capable of containing it. Yerushalayim will overflow from her newly acquired inhabitants and the surrounding areas will rapidly fill to capacity. The entire Judean hills will be saturated with newly sprouted neighborhoods but the Jewish influx will continue. The new wave of Jews will take possession of the entire land of Israel and settle therein but even these broadened quarters will not suffice. The return will be so encompassing that Zion will truly wonder in bewilderment – from whence did all of her people emerge?

Yet the kindness of Hashem won't end here, and the prophet continues to describe the setting of the future. Yeshaya tells the Jewish people, “Do not be afraid or embarrassed because your shameful past will never be remembered.” (54:4) He adds in the name of Hashem, “I forsook you for a brief moment, and I will gather you in with great compassion. With mild anger I concealed My countenance from you and with everlasting kindness I will have mercy upon you.” (54:7,8)

These passages reflect the concern of the Jewish people over their dark and rebellious past. They hesitate to return to Hashem because their previous wrong doings remain fresh in their minds. They cannot imagine bonding perfectly with Hashem, given how unfairly they acted towards Him in the past. Hashem responds that they should not hesitate to return because no trace will remain of their earlier ways. Hashem's blessing will be so encompassing that it will be virtually impossible for the Jewish people to relate to their earlier experiences. They will develop such close relationships with Hashem that they will be incapable of imagining what it was like without Him. How could they have ever appreciated life without their close and perfect relationship with Hashem?

The Navi Yeshaya is describing a massive real estate boom in Jerusalem that seems never-ending. There will be a migration of people from all over the world, and all of the Judean hills will become full. This sounds like what is happening today. The demand for an apartment in Jerusalem is so high and the expansion is incredible. If one had any doubt if we are living in the messianic age his uncertainty should disappear at the obvious enactment of the prophecy.



Yud Gimme! Midos

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

The highlight of the prayers for the entire month of Elul all the way up until Yom Kippur is the *tefilla* of *yud gimme! midos* – the thirteen attributes of compassion. The *Gemarah* in *Rosh Hashana* reveals to us just how powerful this prayer is, and points out that Hashem Himself appeared dressed as a *chazzan*, wrapped in a *tallit*, in order to teach Moshe how to say the words properly.

Many questions arise about such a striking description of Hashem. Why did Hashem have to appear as a *shaliach tzibur*? What is the significance of the number 13?

Moreover, why have we been saying this *tefilla* for hundreds of years without knowing the answers to these questions? And yet this is the only prayer that, according to the *Gemarah*, Hashem guarantees we won't come up empty-handed when we say it.

To begin to unravel the secret of this prayer, we must look to the source. The *Gemarah* in *Maseches Rosh Hashana 17b* recounts the entire episode whereby Hashem teaches Moshe this *tefillah*, and presents three different opinions as to where the 13 midos start from. *Tosfos* says they begin with the words Hashem Hashem. The *Gemarah* explains that the first Hashem is an attribute of mercy before a person sins, and the second Hashem is for a person after he has sinned. The *Rosh* asks why we need Hashem's mercy before we sin. We didn't do anything yet. I think is most poignant answer to this question is the one given by the *Maharal*: Of course we need Hashem's mercy. We need it every moment of our lives. Even for what seems like the simple act of breathing, we seek His kindheartedness. His compassion is manifested by abundant *chesed*, as the *pasuk* says *olam chessed yibaneh*; the whole world is built on the foundation of *chesed*. This is why Hashem created the world; He wanted to bestow *chesed*, as the *baalai machshava* explain.

Hashem uses the *Yud Gimme! Midos* to enable each person to do *teshuvah*. These are the midos of *chanun* – which means forgiving someone who really doesn't deserve to be forgiven – and *erech apayim*. This gift comes from the world to come, not from this world, and as we recite each word of the *Yud Gimme! Midos*, we have the ability to awaken the upper spheres and bring more and more drops of supernatural blessings down to this world, all the way to the last *mida* of *venakeh* when Hashem cleanses us and renews our *neschama*.

The *sefarim* tell us that the 13 *midos* by which the Torah is expounded correspond to the 13 *midos* of *rachamim*. In fact, the *Rokeach* says that when a person learns Torah, he awakens the 13 *midos* of *rachamim*. The *gematriah* of *ahavah* love is 13. 13 is also the *gematriah* of *Echad* – one. In addition, 13 is the number of words in the *bracha* on learning Torah, as well as the number of words in the *bracha* of *Chanuka*. And of course 13 is the age for a *bar mitzva*, which is when the *yetzer tov* joins the *neschama*. Lastly, when aligning the 13 *midos* with the months of the year, the month of Elul corresponds to the *mida* of *rav chessed*. This is what Elul and these awesome days are all about – Hashem's love and *chesed* for the Jewish people. And when we cry out these 13 *midos* with all our heart, we are guaranteed to receive results, paid in full.

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

Teruah – Long or Short? The Machlokes Rashi and Tosfos

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



We previously discussed the machlokes between Rashi and Tosfos as to what is the correct length of a tekiah and a teruah. According to Rashi, for a teruah, it is enough to blow three short sounds, but according to Tosfos it must be nine short sounds. The length of the tekiah will also depend on this machlokes. According to Rashi the tekiah must be the length of three short sounds, and according to Tosfos, the length of nine short sounds.

The opinion of Rashi can also be a chumra

Although Rashi's opinion is usually a kula, allowing for a short tekiah or teruah, it can also be a chumra, in certain situations.

Let us talk about the following scenario: one is up to the set of tr"t and when blowing the teruah he got stuck in the middle of the teruah, blowing only three short sounds. According to Tosfos, that is not a valid teruah and he can just blow the teruah again. However, according to Rashi, this was a good teruah and if he wants to blow another teruah that can be a problem of a hefsek, breaking the connection between the first and last tekiah. The only way to satisfy both Rashi and Tosfos, would be by starting again that set of tr"t. This is, indeed, the ruling of the Chayei Adam (142:12) that one should be machmir both ways and start over that set.

The Eleph Hamagen (a commentary on the Mateh Efraim) quotes an interesting compromise mentioned by the Maharsham in Daas Torah (590:8). He suggests that this depends on mitzvos tzrichos kavanah (to fulfill a mitzvah, one must have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah). When he started to blow nine sounds, he was trying to fulfill the mitzvah according to Tosfos and was not willing to suffice with the three sounds, which is good according to Rashi. Therefore, the three short sounds that he blew are not a fulfillment of a mitzvah and should not be a hefsek.

But then he suggests that this is only true on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, when blowing the shofar is a Scriptural command. Then the regulations of mitzvos tzrichos kavanah will apply and we can invalidate a sound blown without the proper intent. However, when he blows on the second day, which is of a rabbinical nature, we do not apply the rule of mitzvos tzerichos kavanah. Therefore, the sound blown, even without the proper intent, will be halachically valid and will cause the connection between the first and last tekiah to be lost. Thus, it will come out an interesting twist, where the second day of Rosh Hashanah will be stricter than the first.

The Maharsham brings the Orchos Chaim and the Hadras Kodesh, who rule that even on the 2nd day you were not yotzei, because it is like one who had in mind not to fulfill the mitzvah, which negates the mitzvah fulfillment, even by a dirabanan.

The Eleph Hamagen, however, takes issue with this suggestion. He asserts that the concept of mitzvos tzrichos kavanah is only applicable in a case when one has in mind not to fulfill the mitzvah. But in this case, he does have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah of blowing a teruah. Since a person wants to fulfill a mitzvah, why should we assume that he does not want to fulfill the mitzvah according to any opinion?

However, the Mikraei Kodesh (Yamim Nora'im 18) rules that this is considered having in mind to fulfill the mitzvah

and one must therefore blow that set again. The same ruling is given by the Minchas Yitzchok (7:38:1) and Rav Elyashiv (Ashrei Ha'ish 3:16:12).

The Elef Lamagen on the Matei Efraim (597) also writes that one should be concerned with both opinions and blow again. He adds that although the Magen Avraham and the Mishna Berura do rely somewhat on Rashi, since we are dealing with a safeik d'oraisa, one should definitely be concerned with both opinions and blow over. But this whole discussion is only in regards to the teruah, but if one blew a short tekiah at the end, since according to Rashi, he is done and according to Tosfos it is meaningless, one can just blow over that tekiah.

In Summary

There is a machlokes between Rashi and Tosfos as to what is the correct length of a tekiah and a teruah. According to Rashi, if he blew a short teruah, blowing another teruah may be a hefsek.

Comments and questions are welcome and can be sent to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com.

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

CELL: 845-499-6354



Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת ביצה
- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently: הלכות חול המועד

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- Evening Shuirim in Halacha and Hashkafa by prominent Morei Horah

Firstborn Rights



Rabbi YY Jacobson

This week's Torah portion (Ki Seitzei) states the following law:

"If a man will have two wives, one beloved and one unloved, and both the loved and unloved wives have sons, and the firstborn son is that of the unloved one; on the day that this man wills his property to his sons, he cannot give the son of the beloved wife birthright preference above the son of the unloved wife, the firstborn.

"Rather, he must recognize the firstborn, the son of the unloved one, to give him the double portion in all his property."

On the most literal level, these verses mandate that a firstborn son shall inherit a double portion of his father's estate, while each subsequent son shall inherit an equal portion of the property. A father does not have the power to bequeath the double portion reserved for the firstborn to one of the other sons he loves, and any attempt to do so is ignored by Jewish law.

What is the spiritual meaning of the seemingly coarse description of "a man who will have two wives, one beloved and one unloved, and both the loved and unloved wives have sons, and the firstborn son is that of the hated one"? How are we to understand this in the universe of the spirit?

The Struggling Vs. the Romantic Soul

Judaism teaches that the relationship between each husband and wife reflects the cosmic relationship between Hashem (the Groom) and the Jewish people (the Bride).

There are two types of people who enter into a marriage with Hashem: the "beloved spouse" and the "unloved spouse." The "beloved spouse" represents those individuals who enjoy a continuous romance with Hashem. Their souls are overflowing with spiritual ecstasy, selfless idealism, and fiery inspiration. They cannot stop loving Hashem, and Hashem cannot stop loving them. On the other end of the spectrum stand the "despised spouses," people possessing numerous qualities that can easily be spurned: immoral urges, depressing feelings, vulgar passions, ugly temptations, angry sensations.

These are the people whose hearts are not always ablaze with love toward the Divine oneness of reality; their marriage to their Divine soul is a struggle. Their psyches vibrate with paradox. Throughout their life, they must battle not to become a victim of challenging instincts and cravings.

The Torah teaches us that Hashem's "firstborn son" may very well come not from His union with the beloved spouse, but rather from His relationship with the despised spouse. The spiritual harvest that a struggling human being produces as a result of his or her tumultuous romance with Hashem, may often be far deeper and more powerful than that of the spiritually serene person.

Working with all the parts in my brain and heart, discovering the goodness deeply hidden in all of my emotions and dispositions, brings me to a much deeper space of oneness and love. The morality and the integrity that emerges from the midst of my confronting daily the parts of me that seem so loathsome contain a unique depth and splendor not possessed by the straightforward saintly path.

Thus, "On the day that He wills His property to His sons, He cannot give the son of the beloved wife birthright preference above the son of the hated wife, the firstborn. Rather, He must recognize the firstborn, the son of the hated one, to give him the double portion in all His property." On a spiritual level, this means, that on the day that Moshiach will come, when humanity will finally taste the full-Divinity in the world – and when I discover the Moshiach consciousness in my own intimate life – a "double portion" of Godliness will be revealed in the arduous labor and sweat of the individual who never stopped fighting for his soul.

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 acronyms continued

ELUL: ANI LEDODI VEDODI LI Shir Hashirim 6,3

The concept of tshuva in general, returning, amending and working on your relationship with Hashem.

ELUL: ISH L'REIEIHU UMATANOS L'EYONIM Esther 9,22

This represents the concept of gemilus chassadim and tzedaka.

ELUL: ES L'VAVCHA V'ES L'VAV Devorim 30,6

Represents serving Hashem with your heart, which is tefillah.

ELUL: INA L'YADOY V'SAMTI LACH Shmos 21,13

This pasuk is talking about orey miklat, a city of refuge, alluding to study of Torah, which is a spiritual refuge from your yetzer hora.

- Based on the Rebbe's letter and Toros. Igros Kodesh V3, P173, towards end of letter. This letter is about the Rebbe's brother-in-law and sister-in-law that were killed by the Nazis yimach shmam v'zicharam... in Treblinka. Their yortzeits...

Remember Amalek, Remember Shabbos

“זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק” – Remember what *Amalek* did to you. It says in the *sefer Chiyim* regarding the *mitzvah* of *mechiyas Amalek* – eradicating Amalek, that there were two evils which *Amalek* perpetrated. The first is the evil he did with *Klal Yisroel*, that he went to battle with them. The second, and the main evil that he did, is that he went against *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* – he infringed on the honor of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*. Chazal tell us that the Name of Hashem, and His throne, will not be complete until the very essence of Amalek is obliterated. That which *Amalek* did to us, *Klal Yisroel*, is easy for us to feel for they are the reason that we are in golus today. All the *tza'ar* and afflictions that *Klal Yisroel* have are because of *Amalek*. However, that which *Amalek* marred the honor of *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* in this world, that is something we must also connect to, and want *Amalek* to be obliterated, so that the Name of Hashem and His throne will once again be complete in this world.

This is why there is a command, “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק” – Remember what *Amalek* did – “לך” – “to you”. But the Torah also tells us, “תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים” – that we must seek to eradicate *Amalek* from this world because of what he did to *shomayim* – that to this world, the Name of Hashem and His throne are not complete. We find a similar concept in

regards to *Shabbos kodesh*. It says in the סידור של שבת regarding the posuk “אך את שבתותי תשמורו” – the word, “שבתותי” – is plural, referring to more than one Shabbos – for the *kedusha* of Shabbos is split into two parts. The first part is called, “שבת לד” – that Shabbos was given to *Klal Yisroel* to praise Hashem, and to toil in the Torah. The second part is called, “שבת לכם” – that is for *Klal Yisroel* to delight in food and drink. We can now explain the statement in *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* – *Klal Yisroel* said to Moshe Rabbeinu that one posuk says, “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק”, and one posuk says, “זכור את יום השבת לקדשו”, – how can we keep both? The intent of the question was that both of these mitzvos have purpose to be performed for the sake of Hashem, and for them to have personal benefit. Being that there is an aspect of doing it for their own benefit – practically speaking, how are they supposed to perform them *l'shem shomayim*?

Moshe Rabbeinu answered them, וזה זכרו ולקדשו, וזה זכרו ולאבדו that first one needs to be *mekayeim* these mitzvos in the simple manner, doing it for oneself. Remember what Amalek did to *Klal Yisroel*, the terrible harm they caused, and remember to heed Shabbos and eat and drink. If one will do these mitzvos properly, then *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* will help them to get to the higher level, of keeping Shabbos *l'shem Hashem*, and obliterating Amalek for the sake of Hashem. It is a goal that we must have – and we must beseech *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* to help us get to the elevated status of serving Him.

Relationships

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



An important *mitzvah* in this *Parsha* of *Mitzvos*, concerns our responsibilities during the first year of marriage.

relationship. We can go far away in our minds. And yes our wives will feel this.

We can't go to war, or be busy with anything that will take up all our time.

In some circles, it might seem as if couples are living in two different worlds.

We concentrate on getting to know our wives, bonding and forging a close connection- and making them happy.

There is almost no connection.

The Torah got there first...happy wife, happy life.

Not sustainable for very long, children witnessing this learn to hide their emotion and the healing powers of a healthy home are absent from their lives, heavily affecting future generations.

For those who think they know better, read on.

Communication is essential. Closeness is the answer.

Naki yiheye l'beiso, the *posuk* states. Keep your relationship unencumbered, clean, the lines of communication open.

Shimon was shocked when he saw his wife's tears.

Advice for couples at all stages. It's obvious that spouses who discuss matters civilly have a better marriage than those that shy away from discussion.

“What don't I do for you”, she said, “making the best meals, taking care of your world so you may sit and learn peacefully. Yet yesterday when I brought you tea, you asked me to please leave as I was disturbing you!”

Being dan l'kaf zechus, judging favorably, is a major component of a good relationship.

Shimon would never say such a thing. Yet his wife was convinced

No less so with our spouses- the single most important relationship in our lives.

Suddenly, he realized what had happened.

We men tend to be closed, showing little emotion and vulnerability. This is a mistake that makes our wives feel as if they are roommates and not soulmates.

He was learning Eruvin where the gemara talks in depth about a *lechi*, a side post, placed at the entrance of an alleyway, permitting carrying on Shabbos.

We don't have to travel far to weaken our

The Hebrew word for sidepost is *lechi*.

Some say there must be 2 side posts – “*lechi mikan* and *lechi mikan*.”

His wife walked in as he was saying *lechi mikan*, which also means please go away from here- in Hebrew. How important clear communication is when we might feel emotionally distant from our spouses!

The Berditchever says, Hashem isn't certain whether to seal our judgment – so we participate...

He has us witness another person doing wrong and gauges our reaction; if we judge favorably, then Hashem judges us favorably, if not, then we have signaled which type of judgment Hashem should take towards us, *Chas V'shalom*.

With Rosh Hashanah coming up sooner than we think- let's internalize this lesson. Substituting negativity and criticism with love and concern.

Let your spouse and children know how much you love them and how much they mean to you.

It's a perfect segue to Rosh Hashanah.

Good Shabbos!



Summer 2023

Early Friday Mincha

מנחה גדולה (between 1:31-1:34) | 1:45
2:00 | 2:15 | 2:30 | 2:45 | 3:00 | 3:15
3:30 | 3:45 | 4:00 | 4:15 | 4:30 | 4:45
5:00

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Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!

שופטים – כי תצא

9:15 pm – 11:15 pm

כי תבוא – נצבים

9:00 pm – 11:00 am

18 Main Bais Medrash

Sephardic Selichot

Starting Sunday August 20

18 Main | 4:30

Selichot followed by שחרית

פרשת כי תצא

Mincha & Maariv At the Later Plag

7:10pm | Tent ב

*Remember to repeat שמע קריאת



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Addiction and Free Will

Rabbi A. Twersky



If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son, who does not hearken to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother . . . a glutton and a drunkard (Deut. 21:18-20).

The Talmud says that the capital punishment of the wayward son was never carried out and is a technical impossibility. Why then does the Torah mention it? So that we will be rewarded for studying it (Sanhedrin 71a).

Is it logical to have a Jewish law that is a technical impossibility and is there only to be studied in theory? And what is the specific reward for this?

Rabbi Elyah Lopian addresses this issue. He prefaces with a question. The Talmud says that the wayward son is a youth who steals to satisfy his gluttony and his craving for alcohol. The harsh punishment decreed by the Torah is not for the crime of theft, but because his behavior is certain to progress to the point where he will kill to satisfy his cravings.

Rabbi Lopian says that the Torah relates that when God provided water for Ishmael to prevent him from dying of thirst in the arid desert, the angels protested, "Why save him? His descendants will kill Jews!" (as we so tragically know). God responded, "I do not judge people by what may transpire in the future."

Why, then, is the wayward son punished for what he will do in the future?

Rabbi Lopian answers that every person has freedom of choice in his moral and ethical behavior. Even a profligate sinner may do teshuvah, repentance. However, a youth who steals for food and drink has lost his freedom of choice. His cravings have overwhelmed his freedom of choice, and he is capable of eliminating anything that stands in the way of his gratifying his desires.

Anyone familiar with addiction recognizes the phenomenon Rabbi Lopian describes. An addict essentially loses his freedom of choice and becomes enslaved by his addiction. I have repeatedly heard recovered addicts say, "When I needed drugs, I did things that I never thought myself capable of doing."

Any addiction can enslave a person, whether it be to alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or food. It is, therefore, extremely important that we take great precaution not to develop habits that can be destructive.

This is especially important for parents to know. It is not uncommon for parents to think that their son's frequent recourse to alcohol is a phase which he will outgrow. It is far more likely that the condition will progress to most serious proportions.

When parents become aware of use of drugs or excessive use of alcohol in a child, it is a mistake to think that asking or ordering him to stop will be effective. He may have lost his freedom of choice. Parents should consult someone with established competence in addiction, and follow the advice they are given.

Understanding the unrelenting course of addiction is a reward we receive from studying this portion of the Torah.



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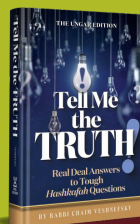
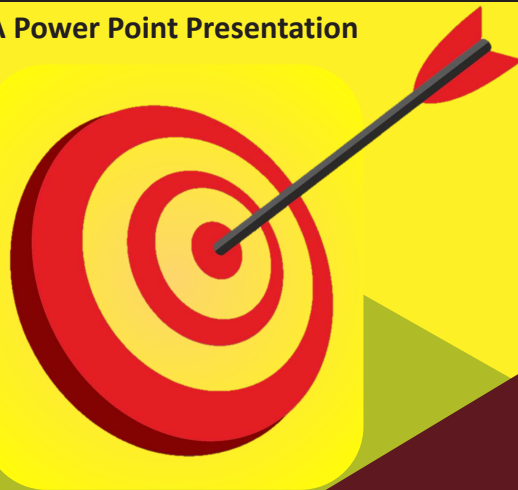
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THE ENEMY WITHIN

R. Berel Wein

Jewish homiletical tradition has dealt with the “enemy,” who is being warred against in the opening verse of the parsha, as being the evil instinct of the “warrior” itself. In the immortal

words of the famous cartoon character Pogo, “we have met the enemy and they are us!” This is in consonance with the words of the Talmud that the opening topic of the parsha – marriage to the attractive woman, a non-Jewish captive – has specific reference to one’s own struggle with the basic desires and evil instincts that bedevil us all.

The true struggle in life is therefore not really against others who may not wish us well as much as it is against our own conflict-torn nature. Temptations, both physical and monetary, and power-driven ambitions abound in our everyday existence. Falsehoods, lame excuses, or the feeling that “everyone does it” and that one will never get caught up and publicly exposed in the scam or scandal are the weapons of the enemy that lurk within us, preying on our built-in weaknesses.

Unless one truly realizes how vulnerable each and every one of us is regarding our internal enemy, there is little hope of creating effective defensive strategies to combat it. The haughty arrogance of unwarranted self-righteousness is one of the most serious moral and personal defects that a person may possess.

This is the message that the Talmud delivers to us when it states that one who sins and yet remains confident that one will later be able to repent and cancel the sin, is never able to truly repent of that sin. One should not underestimate the enemy that lies within us.

The month of Elul traditionally was set aside as a particular time when that internal enemy was to be identified and confronted. In our busy and crowded world, our schedules allow precious little time to think about our true selves – our goals and the purpose of our existence. Our enemy confounds and confuses us with all of the myriad details, pettiness, and distractions that our super busy world inflicts upon us.

Rabbi Yisrael of Salant was once asked if one has only ten minutes a day to study Torah, should one study Talmud or Mussar (the ethical teachings of Judaism.) He answered that one should study Mussar for then he would come to realize that he has much more time than just ten minutes in the day to study Torah. By that Rabbi Yisrael outlined his method of confronting the inner enemy that convinces us that we are unable to improve, that we are too weak or habit-stricken or that we are simply too busy and preoccupied with other issues to think about ourselves.

Ignoring the enemy is the surest way of being defeated by it. I think that tradition placed such an emphasis on the month of Elul, for it is the self-confrontation that this month indicates to us that is the strongest weapon in our spiritual arsenal. In preparation for the days of awe and judgment that are soon upon us, let us use this time wisely and efficiently.



The Rebellious Son Within

Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein

If a man has a wayward and rebellious son, who does not listen to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother. They discipline him –but he does not listen to them. Then his father and mother shall take hold of him and take him out to the elders of his city...All the men of the city shall pelt him with stones and he shall die.

The Torah employs two words for a male person – *adam*, and *ish*. The primary meaning of the former is related to *edameh*, I will compare. Such a person makes no move, utters no words, and indeed thinks no thought without comparing himself to the standard of the Torah. In other words, he exists on a plane of constant *devekus*, connecting everything in his sphere of influence, including the inner realms of his emotions and his thoughts, with HKBH. He does not require any special provisions to protect himself from foreign desires, because he has moved off-limits to any assaults by the *chitzonim*, the darker forces of spiritual emptiness.

They are powerless to move him. His constant connection with HKBH leave him impervious to their designs because he dwells in the protection of His closeness.

So much for *adam*. The rest of us are called *ish*, opening up all kinds of unsavory possibilities. Going back to our early history, we, the majority, are represented by the image of the revolving sword wielded by the angel guarding the Way of G-d. The sword keeps turning, much as our lives do, from good to bad, and from bad to good. At times we succeed in empowering our neshamos to prevail over our lower tendencies, and we yearn for more davening, learning, and mitzvos. But at other times, especially when involved in our pursuit of our physical needs, we forget to turn our activity into avodah by directing out thoughts completely to Him. This leaves us vulnerable and exposed; we can easily be led from this to one *aveirah* after another.

Such is the subject of our *pesukim*. They speak of an *ish*, not an *adam*. The *ish* finds himself perpetually in the cross-hairs of two competing tendencies – that of his *neshamah*, which desires connection to Hashem, and that of his lower nature.

This *ish* has a son, meaning a set of actions that are the chief progeny of a person. Our *parshah* speaks of a person whose actions are chiefly determined by his lower tendencies, those that rebel against travelling the straight and narrow path of propriety and good. He is not at his core a bad person. The voices of his father and mother, i.e. the roots that generated him, still call out to him. Without anyone saying anything to him, he still hears their message.



If he does not hear those messages that urge him to return to the Way of G-d, what will become of him? It depends on how he responds to the other opportunities remaining for him to extricate himself from his rut.

His first opportunity comes when his father and mother – those inner voices of his roots – chastise him and discipline him after he failed to respond to their message.

This *mussar* chastisement inheres in the words of Torah. When his inner voices are insufficient to completely rebuff the countervailing voices, when they fail on their own to get him to repudiate his imperfect actions, he still has recourse to a Torah that can inspire him to change.

Alas, this often still fails to move him. He either does not avail himself of the support that words of Torah can give him, or those words do not suffice to energize him. At that point, his inner voices must grab hold of him and take him to the elders of the city. The takes this process to mean to be brought to a place frequented by Hashem, *Knesses Yisrael*, and the days of old.

A Bar Mitzvah Drasha to Remember



Rav Yissachar Frand

The following is the story of a Dvar Torah that was said in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, some 68 years ago this Shabbos:

Rav Simcha Schepps was a disciple of the Brisker Rav, a student at the Mirer Yeshiva, and a student in the Yeshiva of Baronovich. He eventually became a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Torah Vodaath in New York. During the war he made it to Japan with the Mirer Yeshiva and in 1941 was able to come to the United States. Like many who came at that time, his main focus was to try to get other Jews out, particularly those Yeshiva students who were still stranded in Shanghai.

As it happened on *Parshas Ki Seitzei* 1941 Rav Schepps was in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. He asked the *gabboim* of the two shuls there for permission to make a financial appeal on Shabbos on behalf of the Yeshiva bochrim stranded in Shanghai. The *gabboim* refused and explained that Succos time they always conducted an appeal for the Federation and they were afraid that an appeal now for the Yeshiva *bochrim* would negatively impact that appeal.

As it turned out, there was a Bar Mitzvah in one of the two shuls that Shabbos with a big Kiddush. Rav Schepps asked permission from the father of the Bar Mitzvah bochur to speak at the Kiddush and was given permission to do so.

At the Kiddush, Rav Schepps asked the following question: The Torah states that we are not allowed to marry an Ammonite or a Moavite because they did not greet us with bread and water when we were on the road after leaving Egypt. However, when countries are at war, we understand that there will be an embargo. We all understand, he said, that there is currently no trade between the United States and Japan because we are at war. What then, is the Torah's complaint against the Ammonites and Moavites for not providing the Jews with food and drink – there was an embargo! No commerce was taking place. The government did not allow any trade to go on between countries at war!

The answer is that during war one does not trade between countries, but refugees – stateless people who do not belong to any country – are different! Governments are not at war with refugees, they are at war with countries! Therefore, the Torah is upset at the Ammonites and Moavites for ignoring the needs of the stateless refugees! That should have had nothing to do with politics or the protocols of states. It is downright wickedness and cruelty for which there is no room in the Jewish nation.

At this point Rav Schepps said, "My friends, there are refugees in Japan without country, without family, without food, without anything! If you do not give them money, the Torah will record about the people of McKeesport that they are like Ammonites and Moavites who refused to contribute to stateless people. Do you want that to happen?"

At which point the response was "G-d forbid!" An appeal was made and they raised money which allowed them to bring over 3 extra young men from Japan.

Most boys do not remember what the Rav said at their Bar Mitzvah, but I'm sure that this Bar Mitzvah boy remembered what Rav Schepps said at his Bar Mitzvah for his entire life!

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by Rabbi Efraim Goldberg

The Secret to True Happiness

Is the Present

Once, while in NY, I was very taken by something in the subway. On this particular subway car, there were three ads in a row that all revolved around the same thing – happiness. While marketing different things, all three ads tried to leverage people's general unhappiness and dissatisfaction in life. Each one used the same tactic, 'Are you searching for happiness? Buy our product.'

Most of the planet is consumed with the pursuit of happiness, but unfortunately many spend their lives in pursuit without actually ever catching that elusive feeling.

There are many aspects to achieving happiness and it would be a gross oversimplification to reduce it to one thing. That said, I want to share one insight.

Harvard Professors, Matthew A. Killingsworth and Daniel T. Gilbert published a study in the journal, Science, in which they found that people spend 46.9 percent of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they're doing.

Happiness is a direct correlation to our peace of mind. Living a distracted, fragmented life filled with mind-wandering and lack of focus is the source of people's unhappiness, they argue. The more present we are in that which we are doing, the more focused our lives, the less tension we feel and the result is greater happiness.

It occurs to me that the greatest factor determining the quality and meaning of our davening experience cannot be provided by the Chazan, Gabbai, Rabbi or anyone else. Yes, those individuals contribute to the davening experience, but ultimately whether or not we find meaning in prayer is a result of our ability to focus, shut out distraction and concentrate.

I once received impassioned email from someone who told me that he can't understand how those around him take prayer so flippantly and casually. He ends his email by saying the following (shared with his permission):

"I wanted to ask those around me: Do all of you have perfect health? Do all of the members of your family have great health? Do you and your families all have jobs and parnasa? Do you all have food on your table? Is your house safe and not in foreclosure? Is our Israel perfectly safe in this mad world? Is our own country safe by what is going on around us? Are the Jewish people safe where ever they are?"

"I cannot speak for others," he writes, "but our family has been through some of the worst situations we could have ever imagined over the past few years. If it was not for prayer, I personally would be in the other world, as the stress level was at an all-time high."

Let's be present in all that we do, and let's work especially hard in focusing in our davening, rather than those sitting around us.

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שמעתי ממרן הגר"ד פוברסקי זצ"ל שאמר כי העצה בחודש אלול היא לזכור שעכשיו אלול, כי אם זוכרים שהיום אלול זה כבר משפיע מאד, וממילא נזכרים שצריכים לעסוק בדרכי התשובה.



והיינו שעל ידי שזוכר את אלול יבוא לעסוק במחשבות והתבוננות המביאים לתשובה, כפי שסיפרתי פעם, כי אברך אחד אמר לי שהתחיל לחשוב בכל יום שלוש מחשבות של מוסר, מחשבות קצרות שאינן לוקחות הרבה זמן, מחשבה אחת על מצבו בתורה, כיצד הוא לומד והאם הוא לומד כראוי, ומחשבה שנייה על מצבו בתפילה, האם הוא מתפלל ומכוון כמו שצריך, ומחשבה שלישית כיצד הוא בענייני מידות טובות שבין אדם לחברו, האם הוא פוגע ומצער אחרים או לא.

וסיפר לי אדם אחד שפעם עשה טובה למישהו, והלה אמר לו כי ניכר עליו שאינו עושה את הטובה מתוך אהבת הבריות או מאהבת חסד אלא לשם מצוה, שהוא מחפש לעשות מצוה ומצא דרך לקיים את המצוה על ידי שעשה עימו טובה, אבל לא מפני שהוא דואג לו ומחפש את טובתו אלא לשם מצוה, וזה היה נכון וכאב לו מאד, מדוע באמת אין בו אהבת הבריות, וקיבל את ההערה, והתחיל לחשוב על זה והשתנה מאד, כשיש לאדם הבנה והרגשים כאלה, זה נקרא תשובה.

כשעוסקים בביקורת עצמית זוהי תשובה, וזהו סדר המוסר הקבוע בישיבות חצי שעה בכל יום, ושמעתי על אחד מבני הישיבה שלא היה לומד מוסר כלל, ובמשך הזמן חשב שכדאי ללמוד מוסר, והתחיל ללמוד בספר העיקרים שמדבר מענייני האמונה, והוא לומד בזה בכל יום בסדר המוסר, ומרגיש טעם בזה, וזה משנה את כל החיים שלו, ומאז שהתחיל לעסוק בזה, כל התפילה וכל המחשבות שלו הם אחרות לגמרי, זהו זכירת ה' יתברך, שזו הדרך המעולה ביותר לתשובה כמ"ש רבינו יונה בשער ב'.

למעשה, יש לנו דרכים להתחזק ולזכות לכתיבה וחתימה טובה, לשנה טובה ומתוקה!

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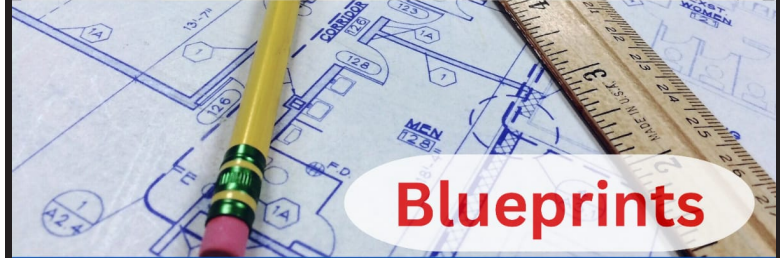
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I ordered 2000 lbs. of Chinese soup. *It was Won Ton.*

Don't spell part backwards. *It's a trap.*

A courtroom artist was arrested today for an unknown reason...
details are sketchy.

Claustrophobic people are more productive thinking out of the box.

I swear I wasn't lying, *I was just writing fiction with my mouth again.*

I can totally keep secrets. *It's the people I tell them to who can't.*

Why do people make end-of-the-world jokes like there's no tomorrow?

The past, present and future walked into a bar, *it was tense*

It will always annoy me that a group of squids is not called a squad

What's worse than raining cats and dogs? *Hailing Taxis*
 Remains to be seen if glass coffins become popular

Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana

Shout out to all the people who don't know what the opposite of in is!



Sam and the Rolls-Royce

Sam Schwartz finished his 18 holes at his expensive country club but declined his buddies' drink invitation, explaining that he had an early dinner invitation and was late already.

Arriving at the main entrance, he was met by a valet with the bad news that his car wouldn't start, but that they had called a mechanic who would be there in an hour. "An hour! I'm late already" The young man's face brightened as he pointed to the door and said, "There's Mr. Goldberg. He lives in your neighborhood doesn't he? He can give you a ride." Schwartz thinks to himself, "I can't stand Goldberg, that arrogant, bragging egotist" But he's under time pressure, so he asks for a ride. Goldberg answers, "Of course I'll help you out. And the good news is that you will get to ride in my new Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud."

They are driving along and Schwartz had to admit that he is fascinated by all the dials and digital instruments. He asks, "What's this?" Goldberg answers, "That's my 3D GPS". "And all these numbers?" Goldberg replies, "That's the car status as indicated by the on-board computer."

After a couple of more questions from Schwartz, Goldberg haughtily turns to Schwartz and says "It seems that you have never been in a Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud before, right?"

Sam paused for a second and answers, "Well...never in the front seat."



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