

the arm and point toward the heart, represent feelings and actions. A person who speaks between putting on the *Tefilin Shel Yad* and putting on the *Tefilin Shel Rosh* is a person whose feelings and actions are not consistent with his knowledge of G-d. Such a person endangers himself and his fellow soldiers, and he should not go out to war.

Based on this, one might expect us to put on the *Tefilin Shel Rosh* first, and then the *Tefilin Shel Yad*. First, we know G-d in our minds, and then we translate that knowledge into feelings and actions with our hearts and arms. Nevertheless we put on the *Tefilin Shel Yad* first. Just as Bnei Yisrael said, “*Na’aseh Ve’nishmah*” / “We will do and [then] we will hear,” so we bind the *Tefilin* on our arms, committing ourselves to action, even before we put the *Tefilin* on our heads—before we attain knowledge. (Rabbi Shlomo Katz)

### On a Roll

Salespeople have it tough. The marketplace is flooded with sellers and short on buyers. Intense competition forces suppliers to come up with novel ideas to entice consumers to buy their products. Even in the face of bored customers, vendors keep knocking on doors, sending samples, writing e-mails, and making those exhausting business trips to visit potential buyers. Keeping up their energy level is not easy for those who have chosen to earn a living in sales.

Like others engaging in competitive sports, salespeople are subject to streaks. Their performance runs hot, and then again, cold. Should a salesperson call on a customer and get a stiff rejection, the dejected individual will probably make a weak sales pitch to the next prospect and be turned away again. Nursing a bruised and beaten ego, the seller will possibly avoid even approaching a third potential buyer, assuming a turndown without even speaking to the customer. On the other hand, success breeds success. Even a generally weak approach that generates business will encourage the salesperson to call on another account with a positive, confident attitude that will probably help clinch the sale. And a third pitch will have super seller wooing willing buyer.

In life, we are all streak players. Our Sages say: “*Misvah* produces *misvah* and sin yields sin” (*Abot* 4:2). It’s a matter of direction. If you are on a roll, traveling spiritually upwards, then each step to achievement is easier than the one before. But if you start to fall, the snowball effect can propel you spiritually downhill to unimaginable depths.

Set the tone for your day every morning when you get up. Do something good to begin the streak. One thing certainly leads to another; the only question is: In which direction are you headed? If you are alert during the first few minutes of your day, you can start to point yourself upwards and keep growing in a positive direction all day long.

(One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### Elections, Elections

R' Yosef Ber, the *Bet Halevi*, was once invited to a town which was about to appoint a new *rav*. The town had divided into two camps, each with its own candidate for the post. Matters had gotten so out of hand that the people had literally stopped working at their trades and instead spent their entire time enlisting support for their candidates.

When R' Yosef Ber got up to speak to them, he told them, “There is a certain passage in the Torah which always puzzled me. We are told that when the people cried to Moshe about the absence of meat to eat, Hashem told him to gather seventy elders. What purpose was served by selecting seventy elders at that time, when all were busy complaining about the lack of food? After seeing what is going on here, I can understand it better.

“When Hashem told Moshe to select seventy elders, He realized that everyone would become so totally engrossed in choosing them that they would completely forget about their lack of food.” (Words of Wisdom, Words of Wit)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת לֹאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT SHOFTIM ☆ שַׁבַּת שְׁפִטִּים

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 51:12-52:12

**AUGUST 13-14, 2021 6 ELUL 5781**

Early Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:10 pm**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **7:00 pm**

Late Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **7:25 pm**

Candlelighting: **7:37 pm**

Evening Shema after: **8:35 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: **5:07, 6:45, 7:30, 8:25, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:41 am**

Shabbat Class: **6:15 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 7:15 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **8:34 pm (R"Y 9:06 pm)**

Weekday Minhah: **6:45 & 7:30 pm**

This bulletin is dedicated by **Danny & Marilyn Safdieh**  
in memory of **Meir ben Sabout – Mike Safdieh** לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת מֵאִיר בֶּן צְבוּת

This bulletin is dedicated by **Mitchell Antar**  
in memory of **Eddie Antar** לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת עֲדָה בֶּן רוֹזָה

This bulletin is dedicated by **Joey & Karen Mizrahi**  
in memory of **Joseph Tobias** לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן אֶסְתֵּר

### A Message from our Rabbi

(Debarim 21:3) "וְלִקְחוּ זֶקֶן הָעִיר הַהוּא עֹגֶלֶת בֶּקָר"

“And the elders of the city nearest the corpse shall take a heifer.”

The *misvah* of *eglah arufah* is that if a murdered person was found on the road, the elders of the nearest city had to perform a ceremony with a calf. The *Ibn Ezra* explains that had the closest city been free of sin, their influence would have prevented the murder from happening in their vicinity.

One may ask, why are we blaming the nearest town? Maybe it was just a coincidence that the person was killed there and it happened to be near that town? The answer is, there is no such thing as coincidence, as this story told by Rabbi Y. Hisiger shows.

Rav Mordechai Elefant zt”l, in addition to serving as *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshivat Itri, lived a fascinating life with numerous interesting encounters and experiences. The Itri Kollel had a secretary, a single girl named Golda. The Rabbi and his wife felt that she would be a good *shidduch* (mate) for one of the single fellows studying in the Kollel. They set the two up and the couple hit it off.

At around that time, Rav Elefant went to England, which he would visit several times a year for a few days, staying at the Churchill Hotel. When he arrived in London he was very hungry, so he wanted to go to Bloom's, a kosher restaurant. He hailed a cab and asked the driver to take him to Bloom's Restaurant in Golders Green, a 70 minute ride. Rav Elefant figured that he'd close his eyes and relax in the car until he got to the restaurant, hoping that the driver wouldn't engage him in conversation. He was so hungry that it was last thing he wanted. To his dismay, the driver started talking.

"You a Rabbi?" "Yeah, I'm a Rabbi."

"You from Israel?" "Yeah, I'm from Israel?"

"Would you by any chance know Rabbi Elefant?"

Rav Elefant almost fainted. Of all people, some random cabbie in London had to ask about Rabbi Elefant? Not wanting to get into a lengthy conversation, the Rabbi whose dry sense of humor was second to none said, "Yeah I know him, but don't mention that man's name to me. He is a terrible man."

Strangely, the cabbie got awfully annoyed about Rav Elefant talking against himself. Rav Elefant was intrigued.

"What do you have to do with Rabbi Elefant?" asked the Rosh Yeshivah.

"Well, my daughter, Felicia, is his secretary! She tells me he's such a nice man. How can you talk that way about him?"

The cabbie proceeded to share his life story. It turned out that he was Jewish but his wife was not. She had never converted to Judaism.

"Rabbi Elefant even fixed up my daughter with a boy, a very religious boy with a beard!" said the cabbie proudly.

Finding out that his secretary, whom he had set up with one of his Kollel fellows, wasn't Jewish, Rav Elefant went out of his mind. The cabbie said that she had many Jewish friends in her neighborhood and she thought that if her father was Jewish, she is Jewish. Rav Elefant realized that the Master of the universe put him in this very cab so that he could find out about this.

Rabbi Elefant finally pulled out his passport and showed it to the cabbie, who was so bewildered he almost drove into the restaurant. As soon as Rav Elefant got back to the hotel, he called his wife and told her that Felicia wasn't Jewish. The matter was subsequently resolved according to *halachah*, ensuring that Felicia underwent a proper conversion. The couple ultimately got married, and raised eleven children.

No such thing as coincidence. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## Doctors and Pilots

Seeing is believing. Most of us are natural skeptics, and it is difficult to convince us of something we have not seen with our own eyes. And even then, we are apt to have lingering doubts. Indeed, we take pride in our skepticism, because we know it protects us from all sorts of fraud and deception. We are nobody's fools.

However, the Torah goes directly against this tendency, and exhorts us not to deviate one whit from the words of our Sages, neither to the right nor to the left. The *Talmud* explains that even if they tell us that our right hand is our left and our left is our right, we are to follow them with implicit faith. Of course, our Sages would never tell us something that is patently ridiculous. Rather, the left and right hands are a metaphor for something that is seemingly erroneous according to our perceptions. Nonetheless, we are required to follow their lead rather than our own judgment. The Torah demands that we have faith.

How do we understand this requirement to have faith? Why does the Torah demand of us to go against our natural instincts? Why should we follow blindly rather than take a stand as independent thinkers and demand explanations?

If we pause to consider, however, we will discover that faith forms an integral part of our everyday lives. In fact, without faith we would be practically immobilized. When we get into our cars, we do not worry that our brakes may be defective and will suddenly fail when we are traveling at high speeds. Why? Because we have faith in the manufacturers. When we get on a plane we do not worry that the pilot is incompetent or drunk. Why? Because we have faith in the pilot. When we go to doctors, we generally accept what they tell us. Why? Because we have faith in our doctors.

Without faith, we would be afraid to switch on the lights or put food into our mouths or believe a word anyone tells us. Clearly, Hashem created us with the innate ability to have faith. Why then, if we so easily have faith in our doctors and pilots, do we find it so difficult to have faith in Hashem even when we believe in His existence? Why do we find it so hard to accept all His deeds and commands without question?

The answer lies in our egotism. Doctors and pilots are there to serve us. Accepting them on good faith may result in physical restrictions, but it does not require us to surrender our personal independence in any way. We are still in control of our destinies. They advise. We make the decisions. Such faith comes easily.

Faith in Hashem is an altogether different matter. If we forfeit the right to question His deeds and commands, we acknowledge that we are subservient to Him. We surrender our independence, and that is a very difficult thing to do. But still, we must. For if we believe in Hashem yet refuse to give Him our faith and trust, we would be living a lie.

Therefore, the Torah exhorts us again and again to have faith in Hashem, to overcome the stiff, illogical resistance of egotism and submit to His higher intelligence. Certainly, He is at least as deserving of our good faith as our doctors and pilots.

In our own lives, we experience the egotistical resistance to faith in our children, who find it hard to admit that their parents may be right but would willingly accept the same statements from others. The difference is simple. When we acknowledge the wisdom of parents, we pay a high price in personal independence. Similarly, we pay a high price when we acknowledge the awesome might and wisdom of Hashem. But if we overcome our stubborn egotism and acknowledge the obvious truth, we will find that the rewards of faith are well worth the price we pay for them. (Rabbi Naftali Reich)

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## All in the Mind

"The officers shall continue speaking to the people and say, 'Who is the man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, and let him not melt the heart of his fellows, like his heart'." (*Debarim* 20:8)

*Rashi* z"l quotes the *Mishnah* (*Sotah* 44a): Rabbi Akiva says, "Take these words literally; they refer to someone who cannot stand the sight of battle and cannot look upon an unsheathed sword." Rabbi Yosé Ha'Galili says, "It refers to someone who is afraid of the sins he has committed." The *Gemara* elaborates: According to Rabbi Yosé Ha'Galili, the sin of speaking between putting on the *Tefilin Shel Yad* and putting on the *Tefilin Shel Rosh* is sufficient reason for a person to go home from the front.

R' Chaim Friedlander z"l explains the importance of not talking between putting on the *Tefilin Shel Yad* and putting on the *Tefilin Shel Rosh*, as follows: We read, "You shall know this day and take to your heart that Hashem, He is the *Elokim* — in heaven above and on the earth below — there is none other." Man's *Neshamah* resides in his brain, the seat of knowledge, but it is supposed to extend its influence to the heart, the seat of feelings and desires, and from there, to action, as well. This is the meaning of the verse, "You shall know this day [knowledge is in the mind] and take to your heart." *Tefilin Shel Rosh*, which sit on the head, represent knowledge, while *Tefilin Shel Yad*, which sit on