

ceiling with books is enough to daunt anyone. Going to a class and learning about a myriad of detailed laws that you are required to keep – and realizing that you never heard of them before the lecture – may make you feel like an ignoramus in the spiritual world. But don't fall prey to the Yeser hara's trick!

A Jew is not paid his Heavenly reward for the completion of the task. Like a building, our spiritual self is built one brick at a time – *misvah* by *misvah*. We are rewarded for effort, enthusiasm, and other variables that demonstrate our loyalty to Hashem and our willingness to do His bidding with love.

Yet should you feel that something is still missing, take a moment to remember the words of Rabbi Tarfon: "You are not required to complete the task." Draw a deep breath and continue to do your best with all the enthusiasm you can muster. Rabbi Tarfon's teaching can save you from losing hope and falling into a spiritual rut. (One Minute with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Miracle of Miracles

"The time we spent in the womb of our mothers was the most critical time of our lives; what happened there affects us for as long as we live. We must thank Hashem, that, for most of us, all the thousands of miracles that had to take place for us to have a normal life took place. If there were the slightest imperfection in any of the prenatal processes, our lives would have been entirely ruined."

We thank Hashem each morning for returning our souls to us in the morning. Thanking Hashem on a daily basis for things we take for granted causes us to love Him and appreciate His Miracle of Miracles on a minute to minute basis. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

In the Nick of Time

The flames of World War II had raged through Europe, leaving death and destruction in their wake. There were, however, a handful of Jews scattered throughout Poland who still remained there, although it was unsafe for them in that unstable time. Despite the danger, R' Mordechai Pogromansky set out, accompanied by a *mohel*, R' Mechel, and traveled from one village to the next in search of any surviving Jews.

One Friday, they found themselves in a remote village with no suitable place to spend the imminent Shabbat. "What shall we do?" asked R' Mechel worriedly. "In three hours it will be Shabbat and we are lost in some desolate village!"

"A Jew never feels lost," replied R' Mordechai calmly. "The Torah tells us about Hagar, Abraham's concubine, 'And she went and strayed in the desert.' *Rashi* tells us that her 'straying' was not physical, but spiritual; she returned to the idol worship of her upbringing. How does *Rashi* know this? Perhaps she was actually lost?" R' Pogromansky explained homiletically, "Hagar felt lost in the desert because she was an idolater. But a Jew who believes in Hashem is never lost!"

The pair continued their search through the village. When Shabbat was only an hour away, to their joy they discovered a doorpost with a *mezuzah*. Their knock was answered by a man wearing a *kippah*, holding an infant in his arms. They related their predicament, and he invited them in.

"I am delighted to have you for my guests this Shabbat," he told them. "Perhaps you can help me as well. As you can see, I have my own problem: Tomorrow my son will be eight days old, but it's one hour before Shabbat and I have no one to make his *berit milah*! Perhaps you know of a *mohel* nearby?"

Truly R' Mordechai and his companion had not been lost; they had come to just the place where they were needed. (A *Mazeldig Voch*)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשֻׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהֵיכָל

בס"ד

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SHABBAT SHOFTIM ☆ שַׁבַּת שׁוֹפְטִים

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 51:12-52:12

SEPTEMBER 6-7, 2019 7 ELUL 5779

Friday Shir Hashirim/Minhah: 5:35, 6:30, 6:50 Shaharit: 5:30, 6:30, 8:10, 8:45, 9:00
Candlelighting: 7:02 pm Morning Shema by: 8:54 am
Evening Shema after: 8:00 pm Minhah Gedolah: 1:30 pm
Shabbat Classes: 5:30 pm
Shabbat Minhah: 6:30 pm
Shabbat Ends: 7:58 pm (R)"T 8:30 pm
These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Weekday Minhah: 7:00 pm

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

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

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell Antar
in memory of Eddie Antar לְעִילּוֹי נְשֻׁמַת עֵדֶה בֶּן רוּזָה

Weather permitting, *Bircat Halebanah* will be recited on Saturday night. If not, it may be said until Friday night, September 13.

A Message from our Rabbi

”שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתְּנֶנָּה בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ”

“Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities.” (*Debarim* 16:18)

There is often a correlation between an item's value and its sensitivity to imperfections and flaws. For example, the value of a diamond with a seemingly infinitesimal flaw is seriously diminished, whereas another scratch on an old clunker barely makes a dent in its value. Once we acknowledge and appreciate that we are Hashem's diamond, His treasured nation, we can also embrace our responsibility to carefully guard our correspondingly sensitive souls.

This point is well-taken in our *parashah* that begins with the law that we must appoint judges and officers in every city. This is something that was never done before by the nations. The Dubno Maggid raises a question. Why is it that Jews have so many

more laws and courts than non-Jews? It would seem that we need extra work to straighten ourselves out! He explains, as is his style, with a *mashal* (parable).

A country bumpkin once met a city dweller and they started comparing notes about their different lifestyles. The urbanite noted proudly that there are many more doctors and hospitals in the city than in rural areas.

The other fellow countered, "I'm not sure so many doctors is a good thing. I think they make people sick. Look, where I live we have very few doctors and there are very few sick people. We farmers almost always show up for work, but you city slickers, you people are always taking off days due to sick leave!"

The city dweller smiled. "OK, let me explain. Where you people live, a person isn't considered sick until he is at death's door. As long as he can move, he can drive the tractor and milk the cows. So unless a person is completely disabled, you have little need for doctors. When you use your gross faculties, your physical body, fine tuning is not needed. Many city dwellers, on the other hand, work with their minds. We are actuaries, doctors, lawyers, accountants, programmers and investment bankers. If we are a little under the weather, we cannot perform our jobs properly. Sublime things like one's mind require delicate care. So we have to maintain higher standards for our health, and this fine-tuning is provided by our many doctors."

We are Hashem's chosen people and are expected to live up to high standards of moral and ethical conduct. This standard demands an extensive system of laws and judges, to attain and maintain the level of ethical behavior demanded of Hashem's people. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Roadsigns to Eternity

The Torah tells us about a man who accidentally killed someone. We are to establish cities of refuge where he can flee and live until he can return home. But the Torah does more than tell us to build cities of refuge. In an unprecedented command, it establishes a highway commission, telling us, "Prepare the way for yourself, ... and it shall be for any murderer to flee there."

Rashi quotes the *Talmud* that there were signs posted at each crossroad pointing and declaring, "Refuge! Refuge!" each pointing the way to the nearest refuge city.

But, why? If road signs should be erected, shouldn't they be for Jerusalem, guiding the thousands of tri-annual travelers from the north and south who journeyed there for the *shalosh regalim*? Why should cities that house manslaughter offenders, get guideposts while the holiest city of Israel doesn't?

Rav Meir Shapiro, established one of Europe's most prestigious Yeshivot of its era. The *Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin* housed a magnificent *Bet Midrash*, a spacious dormitory and a dining hall. Its fine accommodations would spare Yeshiva boys the embarrassment of having to beg for meals in the homes of wealthier business people.

But in order for the students not to plead, Rabbi Shapiro did. And so he traveled around the globe, to the US and Canada, to raise funds. On a visit to the office of a prominent businessman, Rabbi Shapiro was asked an unusual question.

"Rabbi," the industrialist proposed, "why is it that you have to see so many Jews to accomplish your goal? If Hashem wanted your Yeshiva to flourish, why didn't He arrange that you meet just one philanthropist who will undertake the entire project, by adding a few zeros to the amount of his check? After all, there are plenty of modern institutions in the US that have been established by one benefactor!"

Rabbi Shapiro smiled. "Let me explain: Hashem not only wants that the *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin* should thrive, he wants as many people in America as possible to know what is happening there as well! Had one man given me a check, and I would

have taken the next boat back, I never would be talking to you about Judaism, about your heritage, your past, and your future! Now however, I meet hundreds of Jews who have heard about the tremendous love for Torah that our students have. They have heard about their devotion to the cause of learning Torah. They know what Tractate we are studying and how we apply Torah to everyday life. Some ask about the size of the building and all about the *Sifrei Torah* that we will be place in the *Aron Kodesh*."

Imagine the scene: A man kills accidentally; he has to flee to the city of refuge. He does not know where the city is. He knocks on a door. "Hello," he exclaims to the startled homeowner, "I just killed someone, um... accidentally. Do you know where the *Ir Miklat* (city of refuge) is?"

Anxiety, depression and even despair is fostered. The buzz is bad. There are murderers loose. And when they inform the public often enough of their misdeeds, it sets an apathetic tone, where reckless manslaughter becomes the norm. The shock of death is dulled, and it becomes part of the repertoire of the urban experience. And wanton disregard becomes contagious. And the virus of sin spreads rapidly. And so the signs are set and the directions are clear and the murderers flee taking refuge in clearly marked cities, no questions asked, at least until the situation is adjudicated.

On the other hand, take the trip to Jerusalem: The city with no directional advisories. Imagine: There is a crossroad. There is no sign. One must knock on a door. "Excuse me, do you know how to get to Jerusalem?"

"Oh! You are going to *Yerushalayim*? Maybe you can wait, I'll come along!" "Perhaps you can shlep this small package for my son in Yeshiva there!" (Some things never change!) Oh! You are going to Jerusalem! When is *Yom Tov*? It is time for me to make my preparations as well! When people have to share the good queries there is excitement, tumult, even spirituality in the air! And it becomes contagious for the good! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Witness

"You shall rid yourselves of evil." (*Debarim* 17:7) **"וּבְעִרְתָּ הָרַע מִקִּרְבְּךָ"**

One who is in the company of sinners and constantly sees their actions will become used to the sin. The sins will gradually become less severe in his eyes.

When witnesses testified against a person who was then sentenced to stoning by the court, the Torah tells us that the witnesses would be the first to throw stones at the man. Why is this? Since they actually saw the sin being committed, they became accustomed to it. Therefore, they are required to initiate the stoning to emphasize upon themselves the severity of the sin. This is what the Torah means by "You shall rid yourselves of evil." You must remove the evil from within your own hearts.

This is a very important principle even today. One must understand that he is constantly being influenced by his surroundings. If we spend much of our time with people who are not observing the *misvot*, we are sure to absorb their indifference to Torah ideals. Therefore, we must try to associate with people who are constantly striving to improve themselves in Torah observance. Then, we are guaranteed to learn from their ways, whether we are conscious of it or not. (*Yalkut Hamishai*)

Unfinished Business

Rabbi Tarfon says: "You are not required to complete the task..." (*Abot* 2:16).

The job of growing in Torah learning, spiritual perfection, and *misvah* observance is somewhat overwhelming. Knowing this, the *Yeser hara* (Evil Inclination) uses his sly wisdom to depress people and make them feel incompetent to complete the task. Just walking into a *bet Midrash* (study hall) and seeing all the walls lined from floor to