

the most humble of all time. He did not underplay his true worth; therefore, insecurity did not compel him to prove his worth to others through showy, haughty behavior.

Each of us has our own insecurities. Very often the only way we can protect our ego is by knocking someone else down or putting on false airs of greatness to impress our friends. Insecurity is the source of haughtiness. We must realize that each of us was given a holy soul and many talents to achieve our personal perfection, our individual greatness, in this world. Our potential is immeasurable.

Rather than surrendering to the urge to put someone down, think for a moment – about yourself and how great you really could be if you would only build yourself and fulfill your potential, rather than destroy someone else.

Take a new look at yourself. It will help you reach your full potential for greatness. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Salting and Stories

The *Rosh Yeshivah*, R' Ezra Attiah, was visiting one of the administrators of *Yeshivat Porat Yosef* when a young man wearing the uniform of the Israel Defense Forces walked into the room. It was Moshe, the administrator's son, just back from a 30-day stint in the reserves, where he worked with the Rabbinate to provide the soldiers with kosher food.

Moshe was thrilled to See R' Ezra. A question of *kashrut* had come up while he'd been on duty, and he wanted to check that he'd handled it properly.

A large supply of meat had been delivered to the army base, but the shipment had been delayed and it had arrived hours after it was expected. The meat hadn't been koshered; it was Moshe's job to properly soak, salt and rinse it – but there wasn't time to do it in the most acceptable way possible. Hundreds of soldiers needed to eat. What was Moshe to do?

R' Ezra began to carefully explain what one could do when circumstances made it impossible to kosher the food in the usual manner. As he was speaking, the door opened and Moshe's mother walked in, a tray of tea and cookies in her hand.

Almost in mid-sentence, R' Ezra began to tell the family a fascinating story about a Rabbi in Aram Soba. R' Ezra was a gifted speaker, and Moshe's mother listened in rapt attention. When he finished, she quietly bid the men goodnight and left the room.

Again, without skipping a beat, R' Ezra returned to the subject of *kashrut* and salting. While they listened, Moshe and his father exchanged puzzled glances. Why the strange interruption; what in the world did the story have to do with the *kashrut* problem?

Though they were too respectful to question R' Ezra, he realized that they were wondering, and after he'd settled the question of the salting, he explained to Moshe just what had happened.

"In the case you told me, there were certain leniencies that were permitted. However, if your mother had heard what I'd been saying, she might have begun to feel that those leniencies were allowed in her kitchen, under normal circumstances. Rather than confuse her, I simply let her enjoy a good story." (Stories of Spirit and faith)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת לְאַה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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SHABBAT SHOFTIM ☆ שַׁבַּת שְׁפָטִים

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 51:12-52:12

AUGUST 21-22, 2020 2 ELUL 5780

Candlelighting: 7:25 pm

Morning Shema by: 8:45 am

Evening Shema after: 8:23 pm

Shabbat ends: 8:22 pm (R"Y 8:54 pm)

Watch for an email for full Shabbat schedule of minyanim

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

**This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell Antar
in memory of Eddie Antar** לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת עֲדִיָּה בֶּן רוֹזָה

A Message from our Rabbi

(Debarim 19:4)

וְזֶה דִּבְרֵי הַרצֵחַ אֲשֶׁר־יָנוּס שָׁמָּה וְחָיִי

"And this is the law of the killer that escapes to there and lives."

Our *perashah* discusses the laws of the unintentional murderer. After committing this act, he must flee to a city of refuge known as an *yken rhg* (*ir miklat*). He remains there until the death of the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest of the Temple. The Mishnah in the Tractate *Makot* states that the mother of the *Kohen Gadol* would supply the prisoners with good food and nice garments. The purpose of this was to make them comfortable in this city to the extent that they would forget about their misery and wouldn't pray for the death of the *Kohen Gadol*, her son. It seems that their prayers would be answered if they did pray. The Gemara explains that the *Kohen* is somewhat at fault for the accident. If he prayed with the proper feeling that the people would be safe, the accident might not have happened.

Rabbi Yehudah Zev Segal z"l asks an insightful question. What type of person is this prisoner? He is a killer, although it was accidental. But the Talmud explains that a man goes to this prison only if he was somewhat negligent. (If it was totally accidental, he goes free.) The prisoner is not subjected to forced labor, and lives in a highly spiritual environment. Nevertheless, he is prepared to pray for the death of the man who is to perform the service in the Temple (*Bet HaMikdash*) - the only one permitted

to enter the inner sanctum of the Temple on the High Holidays. It is surprising that the prayers of such a lowly soul should carry such weight.

Rav Segal answers that these prayers might be answered because laxity on the part of the *Kohen* towards the needs of his brethren is an extremely serious offense.

Every Jew must concern himself with the needs of his fellow Jew. He must identify with their troubles, their trials, their wants and hopes. This was considered so serious by Hashem that even a prayer offered by a self-centered sinner could have brought the *Kohen Gadol's* demise. We dare not be guilty of that same mistake. The needs of the destitute and the ill must be in the forefront of our minds. They will be if we believe that our prayers help. The more we believe in our prayers, the more potent they become. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Persuaded by Ourselves

”כִּי הַשָּׁחַד יַעֲזֹר עֵינַי חֲכָמִים וְיִסְלֹף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקִים”

“You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show favoritism, and you shall not take a bribe, for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts just words” (*Debarim* 16:20)

Bribery is a very powerful force. Even wise people can fall under its spell and even just words can become twisted. The Torah understands that we are not strictly logical creatures but rather we are psychological beings. The Torah describes it as a subtle blinding agent to be wary of.

I heard a story about a man who wanted to visit his friend, who was sick, on Shabbat. He wondered to himself if visiting him would be more of a disturbance and a burden, or a relief. He discussed it with his wife but she had no clear way of knowing whether a Shabbat visit would cross the line of showing concern and enter the realm of being intrusive. Shabbat afternoon this man disappeared for many hours into the frigid and snowy day.

When he returned home covered in snow his wife asked about his friend’s welfare assuming that he had gone to visit his ailing friend. Surprisingly he told her that he had no idea how his friend was feeling. Puzzled, she asked him where he had disappeared to for so many hours. He told her that he had in fact taken a long trek to his friend’s house. Again she asked him about the man’s welfare and he told her that he did not enter to visit him. Then he explained his seemingly bizarre behavior. He said that since he was doubtful about whether or not it would be helpful to visit, he was concerned that if he decided not to go from the comfort of his warm home where he is shielded from the harsh wintry elements, perhaps his decision would not be based upon what is best for his friend but rather on his desire to stay warm and dry.

So he decided that it would be best, more honest of him, if he walked all the way to his friend’s home and from there he would decide what’s best. When he stood outside of the house he thought about it more objectively and decided it was better not to disturb his sick friend on Shabbat! Now that shows a profound understanding of what bribery can do to the mind of a man.

The *Mesilat Yesharim* states, “...the material and physicality of this world – it is darkness of night to the eye of the intellect, and causes him to err on two fronts: Thus the simpletons walk confidently, and fall and are lost without having felt any prior fear...For they feel as secure as an edifice and they fall before having any knowledge whatsoever of the stumbling block. Now, the second error, and this is even worse than the first, is that [the darkness] distorts their sight until they literally see evil as if it were

good and good as if it were evil. Thus they strengthen in clenching to their evil ways. For not only do they lack the [proper] vision to see the truth, to perceive the evil right in front of their eyes, but they also see fit to conjure up great proofs and convincing evidences to support their evil logic and false ideas.”

The mind of a person is constantly being bribed and blinded. It helps for a person to be aware of this fact. If a person is truly blind, and he realizes it, he can seek help and find someone to advise him to navigate the darkness. The second type of blindness is far more dangerous. He’s worse than Mr. Magoo behind the wheel. Not only is he legally blind but he thinks he can see, and he’s drunk too with his false and self-serving idealism

The Dubno *Maggid* told a *Mashal* of a man tramping through the woods and noticing all around him on trees high and low, there were bull’s eyes, and in the center of the center of each bull’s eye was an arrow shot with force. He became curious to discover who it is that can hit the center of the target every time. Then he met a chap with a quiver and a bow. He asked him, “Are you perhaps the author of all these center shots?” Proudly he nodded yes. Then he asked the marksman, “How do you manage to hit the center every time?” The man answered, “It’s really quite easy! First I shoot the arrow, and then I paint the bull’s eye!”

He’s quite dangerous, but he sure knows how to make himself look and feel right. First one acts, however unjustly, and brilliantly justifies himself. Then he defies all standards of rationality and with genius rationalizes. It may be wise to not be so persuaded by ourselves. (Rabbi Label Lam)

Witness

”וּבַעֲרַת הָרַע מִקֶּרְבְּךָ” (*Debarim* 17:7)

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 in order 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*)

Great Humility

Matzah allegorically represents humility. Its flat, plain appearance, simple ingredients, and bland taste all reinforce the image of the humble, unassuming being.

Most of us would describe humble people as shy, bent over, and soft spoken, maybe even afraid of their own shadows. But *Rabenu* Yonah paints quite a different picture. “The essence of humility,” he explains, “is a true understanding of one’s self-worth.” Moshe *Rabenu* was the greatest man of all time, yet the Torah praises him as