

PARSHAS SHOFTIM

לעילוי נשמת ר' ניסן בן ר' שמואל והעניא בת ר' גרשון • ולעילוי נשמת וועלוועל בן שלמה הלוי ז"ל • ולעילוי נשמת ר' אלטר חיים בן ר' יצחק • ולעילוי נשמת חיה גולדה בת יונה

This issue is sponsored refuah shelatma for פרומעקט

Relying on Hashem

R' Pinchas Bloom

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum zt"l explains the issur for a king to accumulate excessive wealth. The Torah gives a specific reason why a king may not have too many wives: "ולא יסור" – so that his heart will not be led astray. Likewise, regarding having too many horses, the Torah explains that this could cause the Jewish people to return to Mitzrayim.

However, regarding money, the Torah simply says: "ובכסף זהב לא ירבה לו מאד" – "He shall not accumulate for himself excessive silver and gold."

Why doesn't the Torah give a reason for this prohibition?

Rav Shmuel explains that the reason is inherent in the desire itself. Why does a person want to accumulate an enormous amount of money? Because money gives him a feeling of security. As the pasuk says: "הבוטחים על חילם וברב עשרם יתהללו" – "Those who place their trust in their wealth and glory in their great riches." (Tehillim 49:7)

With wives or horses, the king does not necessarily place his bitachon in them, so the Torah needs to explain the specific danger. But when a person feels that he needs more and more money, the danger is the money itself: he begins relying on his wealth instead of relying on Hashem.

Rav Shmuel continues that this applies directly to parnassah. A person may spend his days and nights working beyond the necessary hishtadlus, taking away time from Torah and from fulfilling his purpose in this world, because he believes that putting in more time and effort will guarantee him more money.

But a person must recognize that money itself has no power. Rav Shmuel describes it as essentially pieces of paper that children play with – "play money." All the money in the world cannot help a person unless Hashem wants it to.

When a person believes that money will enable him to fulfill all his desires and provide his security, he is removing his bitachon from Hashem. Rav Shmuel uses very strong language: this becomes a form of avodah zarah.

Instead, a person must know that every dollar that is meant to reach him comes only from the hands of HaKadosh Baruch Hu:

"ברכת ה' היא תעשיר" – "It is the bracha of Hashem that brings wealth."

The lesson is not that a person should not make the proper hishtadlus. Rather, do what is necessary for parnassah while always remembering where the results actually come from.

The Power of Achdus

R' Daniel Jacobson

"From among your brothers you shall appoint a king over yourself." (Shoftim 17:15)

This week's parsha discusses the laws of a Jewish king. The simple meaning of the pasuk is that the king of Klal Yisroel must come from among the Jewish people.

The Lekutei Yehoshua brings that **Reb Moshe of Kobrin** gave a deeper meaning to these words. He explained "מִקְרֵב אֶחָיִךְ" as "from within a feeling of brotherhood." When there is love, friendship, and achdus among Klal Yisroel, "תשים עליך מלך" – we are able to truly place the King, Hashem, over ourselves and accept the yoke of Shamayim.

We can understand another pasuk in a similar way. When Yosef went looking for his brothers, he said: "אֶת אֶחָי אֲנֹכִי מִבְקֵשׁ" – "I am looking for my brothers." (Bereishis 37:16)

The word את can mean "with," while אֲנֹכִי can be understood as a reference to אֲנֹכִי – "I am Hashem, your G-d." Yosef's

words can therefore be understood: "With my brothers" – through brotherly love and achdus – "I am searching for אֲנֹכִי," a greater connection to Hashem and acceptance of His Malchus.

Rav Tzvi Hersh Hakohen of Rimanov explains a third pasuk in the same way. Lot said to the people of Sodom: "אַל נָא אֶחָי תַרְעוּ" – "My brothers, please do not act wickedly." (Bereishis 19:7)

The word נָא can refer to tefillah. He therefore explains: אל נָא – if a person finds that his tefillah is not going well and he is having difficulty connecting to Hashem, the solution is "אחי תרעו." Strengthen the feeling of brotherhood and friendship with others. The word תרעו can be connected to רעים, friends.

When there is genuine achdus between Yidden, it becomes easier to connect to Hashem. Ahavas Yisroel and closeness to Hashem go hand in hand.

WEEKLYTIDBITS

Bitachon

The Yalkut on Tehillim says that Knesses Yisroel says to Hashem, "Ein li yeshua ela Bach, v'ein einai meyachalos ela Lecha" – "I have no salvation except through You, and my eyes look only to You."

Hashem responds: Because you place your bitachon and hope in Me, I will bring you the yeshua that you need. As the pasuk says, "Yisroel nosha baHashem teshuas olamim" – "Yisroel is saved through Hashem with an everlasting salvation."

The pasuk says, "Baruch hagever asher yivtach baHashem, v'hayah Hashem mivtacho" – "Praised is the person who has bitachon in Hashem, and Hashem will be his source of trust." The pasuk is teaching us that the more we place our bitachon in Hashem, the more Hashem reciprocates and becomes our mivtacho – the One we can rely on to take care of us. Our bitachon itself creates a greater connection to Hashem and brings our yeshua closer.

Watch Your Words

Pirkei Avos teaches, "Hevei zahir bidvarecha" – be careful with your words. A person should always speak with the awareness that whatever he says may eventually be heard. If there is something derogatory or negative that you would not want someone to hear, don't say it. Very often, the one person you hoped would never hear it is the one who eventually does.

There is another important aspect to watching how we speak: nichbadus. A respectable person speaks in a respectable way. Negative or derogatory speech takes away from a person's own dignity, regardless of whom he is speaking about.

This is especially important when we are trying to influence others and bring them closer to Hashem. People are drawn to positivity and to someone who conducts himself with dignity. The way we speak can either push people away or show them the beauty of a life of avodas Hashem.

WEEKLY SCENARIO

Elul is upon us, and instead of feeling inspired, you feel a sense of dread. You know that you need to do teshuva, and the upcoming Selichos are especially difficult because you have never really connected with them. How can you change your attitude and perspective toward Elul and Selichos?

Something to think about:

Elul should bring about a positive feeling. Throughout the year, life moves quickly, and we rarely have the time to stop and think about where we are going. Hashem gives us Elul as a time to reflect and set goals for the year ahead.

When running a business, we first develop a strategy. Once things are underway, we evaluate what is working and what isn't, and make the necessary adjustments. The same applies to avodas Hashem, chinuch, and every important area of life. We need to occasionally take an honest accounting of where we are and determine how we can improve.

Selichos is another tremendous gift. Hashem gives us the Yud-Gimmel Middos HaRachamim, allowing us to ask for forgiveness, do teshuva, and begin again with a clean slate.

Instead of looking at Elul and Selichos as a burden, we can view them as an opportunity Hashem gives us each year to take stock of

where we are and start the new year moving in the right direction.

Positive Action: Set aside a few quiet minutes this Elul to choose one area of your life that you would like to improve, and decide on one practical change you can make going forward.

HALACHOS OF THE MONTH OF ELUL

by R' Ephraim Weller

1.1) Throughout the month of Elul, extra focus should be placed on teshuvah and tefilah, even more so than the rest of the year.

1.2) Many have the minhag to daven Yom Kippur Katan on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul (even though they do not do so the rest of the year). Some even fast on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul.

1.3) When Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out on Shabbos or Sunday, the tefilos of Yom Kippur Katan are said the Thursday before.

1.4) Some have the minhag to say ten perakim of Tehillim everyday of Chodesh Elul, in order to finish Sefer Tehillim two times before Rosh Hashanah. The יהי רצון for saying Tehillim is said afterwards.

1.5) On the second day of Rosh Chodesh, we begin saying "להליל מזמור כד" (להליל מזמור כד) twice a day: once at the end of Shacharis and once in the evening.

1.6) There is a difference of minhagim as to when "לדוד" is said the second time; some say it by Maariv and some say it at Minchah.

1.7) One who davens at a set minyan that says "לדוד" differently than his minhag should say "לדוד" in accordance with his set minyan. However, one who happens to daven in a minyan that differs from his own minhag should say "לדוד" in accordance with his minhag.

1.8) The Shofar is blown every day of Chodesh Elul at the end of Shacharis (before "לדוד").

1.9) One who did not hear the Shofar in the morning does not need to hear it later in the day.

1.10) One who is in middle of Shemoneh Esrei does not need to pause to hear the Shofar.

1.11) When writing a letter during Chodesh Elul, the minhag is to wish the recipient "לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם".

1.12) There is no Bentching Rosh Chodesh on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah.

2. Selichos

2.1) Minhag Ashkenaz is to begin Selichos four days before Rosh Hashanah. However, Selichos must begin on a Sunday; therefore, when Rosh Hashanah falls out on Monday or Tuesday, we begin saying Selichos from the Sunday of the week before.

2.2) The minhag is to say the Selichos of the

first day (Motzei Shabbos/Sunday) at chatzos (midnight).

2.3) The time to say Selichos the rest of the week is before Alos Hashachar. However, one may say Selichos the entire morning, but should try to wake up earlier and say Selichos as close to Alos Hashachar as possible. Selichos may also be said at night, at chatzos.

2.4) One who cannot say Selichos in the morning and would like to Selichos before chatzos at night, must consult a Rav.

2.5) Before Selichos one should try to say Birchas HaTorah.

2.6) One who knows that he will not need the bathroom before Shacharis should try and recite the brachah of על נטילת ידיים before Selichos. One who will be saying the brachah of על נטילת ידיים should also recite אשר יצר and אלקי נשמה before Selichos.

2.7) It is best to say the entire Selichos with a minyan. (Similarly, אשרי should not be started without a minyan present, in order to immediately say kaddish afterwards.)

2.8) One who comes late to Selichos may begin saying Selichos from where the tzibbur is up to.

2.9) One who is davening Selichos without a minyan should skip over the י"ג מדות. However, one may lein the י"ג מדות or say it with the niggun one learns in (in order to show that it is not בקשה). The parts of Selichos that are said in Aramaic should be skipped as well (מחי ומסי, מר די בשמיא) when davening without a minyan.

2.10) When davening with a minyan, the י"ג מדות must be said along with the tzibbur (or at least begun along with the tzibbur). One who is behind the pace of the tzibbur must skip to say the י"ג מדות together with the minyan. However, one may say the parts of Selichos that are said in Aramaic at his own pace, as long as there is a minyan saying Selichos.

2.11) It is best to stand throughout the entire recitation of Selichos. In case of need, one may sit while he is saying the actual Selichos, but should stand for י"ג מדות, א-ל ארך, and יודי ויודי.

2.12) One should not interrupt between the end of Selichos and Tachanun.

FRIDAY	SHABBOS
7:37 Candle Lighting	6:06 Neitz
7:55 Shekiya	8:47 Kriyas Shema (MA)
	9:33 Kriyas Shema (Gra)
	7:54 Shekiya
	8:38 Tzeis Hakochavim
	9:06 72 Minutes

RIDDLE ME THIS

Two people each kill someone בשוגג, accidentally. Both flee to an עיר מקלט. Yet for one of them, the עיר מקלט provides protection, while for the other, it does not. Why?

LAST ISSUE - Q: How is it possible for a man and a woman to have many kids and the youngest one is the b'chor? **A:** Jewish man marries a non-Jewish woman, they have many children. He then converts to Judaism, and afterward the couple had another child, a boy. That son is the bechor.