

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	7:00 PM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
Sof Zman K"ס- גר"א 9:28 ◊	8:52 א"ג
Pikei Avos - By R' Teichman	7:05 PM
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos	7:50 PM
Maariv -	9:03 PM


Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Shacharis 8:30 AM
~ Shiur following Shacharis

Mincha / Maariv 8:05 PM

Monday - Friday

Shacharis		
Monday	ב ה כ" ט	6:30 AM
Thursday		6:40 AM
Tues., Wed., Fri.		6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)		1:45 PM
Mincha/Maariv		8:05 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)		9:45 PM

Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv

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Shul Contacts

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Rabbi Teichman

410-570-3333 or ravzt@hotmail.com

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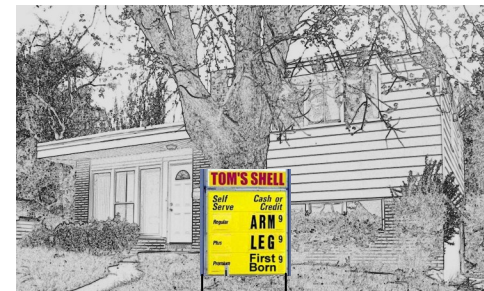
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שבת קודש

פרשת בהר

י' אייר

אהל משה



Rabbi Zvi Teichman

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Issue#185

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rules of Engagement

The very last paragraph of our *Sidrah*, discusses the unfortunate circumstance of a fellow Jew who is forced to sell himself to a Non-Jew as a slave, simply to survive. The Torah goes on to discuss the responsibility of his relatives to redeem him from this degrading predicament. In the event they don't fulfill this duty, the Torah describes how he is nevertheless ultimately freed by the Jubilee year.

The *Baalei HaTosafos* (דעת זקנים) teach us that this portion alludes to our plight among the four exiles. We await for our דודו (ויקרא כה מט), our great "Uncle"; Hashem, and for our בן דודו, our "cousin"; the Moshiach, to free us. If השיגה ידו, we become "sufficient with means"; i.e. merits, then we can redeem ourselves. In the event we are still unworthy, nevertheless we are promised ויצא בשנת היובל (שם שם נד), we will leave with the sounding of the *shofar*. It is reasonable then to assume, that it is in the merit of the sensitivity that is exhibited in the fulfilling of this *mitzvah* particularly that gives us hope that מדה כנגד מדה, as a measure in kind, G-d will release us too from our bondage, *Galus*.

Is it simply our willingness to reach out to assist our kin in distress that is so profound of a virtue? Isn't that something we would expect and not all that noble?

Three times in regards to a Jewish slave, the Torah reiterates לא תרדה בו בפרך (שם שם מג), that we must be careful *not to subjugate a slave through hard labor*.

The first time, it is mentioned in context of a Jewish slave who sold himself due to poverty (ibid). The second time this idea is restated is when the Torah discusses the purchase of a Non-Jewish slave and the imperative of לעולם בהם תעבדו (שם שם מו), *you shall work with them forever*. Although a Non-Jewish slave is forever indentured and may be subjected to "hard labor", nevertheless the Torah continues, ובאחיכם בני ישראל איש באחיו לא תרדה בו בפרך (שם), *but with your brethren, the Children of Israel- a man with his brother- you shall not subjugate with hard labor*.

The final repetition of this concept, is in the portion mentioned above that talks of a Jew sold to a Non-Jew. Although we can not observe how the gentile treats his Jewish slave at home, but at the very least לא ירדנו בפרך לעיניך (שם שם נג), *he shall not subjugate him through hard labor in your sight*. We can not stand idly by if we observe such abuse.

What is this "hard labor" that must be avoided?

Rashi, based on the *Toras Kohanim*, defines hard work as something the owner has no need for, even something as innocent as heating up some water, but is being requested merely to impose his authority on the slave for the sake of keeping him busy. Also under this rubric of "hard labor" is his asking the slave to do work that the owner indeed needs but he doesn't offer up front a specific time limit. Just saying "work till I come back", leaving it totally open ended, transgresses this prohibition. Mindless work or an endless task, is understandably so, considered psychologically "hard labor".

Is the refraining of this cruel attitude such great valor that it merits the ultimate redemption?

Rabbeinu Yonah in his classic *Shaarei Teshuva* (שער שלישי אות ס), states that any work, albeit necessary for the owner, that one suspects the servant is unwilling to do and feels imposed upon is prohibited. He extends this prohibition to include the asking of a favor from any person, even one who he is not in your employ, but is merely too "afraid" or "embarrassed" to deny your request of him and feels "compelled" to accede to your wish. The moment someone is reluctantly expected to reply is the instant one is "subjugating" him to labor.

The very first expectation of Man as described in the Torah after that fateful decision of לעשה אדם בצלמנו (בראשית א כו), *Let us make Man in Our image*, is *They shall rule*, over fish, bird, animal, the whole earth and every creeping thing.

Man was directed to rule and dominate and utilize all aspects of nature for the furtherance of his developing free willed purposeful accomplishment in this world.

With the exception of one, one's fellow man. We are here to serve not to be served. Of course the work activities that are normal and expected in a contractual agreement are part of the deal. It is when we take our authority and impose our desires beyond those rightful boundaries that we lose that which we share with Hashem, our *Tzelem Elokim*, our divinely inspired morality. When we take advantage of our "position" to "rule" over others so that they may serve us, is the very reason why Hashem places us in exile to be ruled over by others and their whims and wishes.

בפרך, *Don't "rule" over others, לא תרדה בו*.

The Talmud (בבבא מציעא פ"ג הל' א) in reference to עבודת פרך in Egypt, tells us that פרך is a contraction of the words פה רך, soft mouth (words). They "seduced" them to labor through appealing words and sentiments. But it was merely a lure to subjugate them.

Perhaps this is the underlying idea in this injunction. Don't soft talk your way to get others to respond. Our calm voice as a boss, teacher, spouse or parent. The privilege of position, including our being a "good friend" that others might be afraid or embarrassed to say no to, laced with undertones of expectation is what we must all be wary of. We must always be sensitive not to abuse that trust or right to "get what we want". That's manipulation. No one should ever need others to be "lured" into their service.

It is not as much the pain inflicted on our "catch" but more so the lack of humanity, nay, divinity that is displayed when we seek to "rule" over man.

If we succeed in exhibiting sensitivity and empathy towards others and diminish our sense of entitlement we will be deserving of being released from the imposing clutches of *galus*!

באהבה,
צבי טייכמאן



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