

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש


Mincha Erev Shabbos → 7:00 PM

ON TIME SHABBOS: 8:17 PM

Daf Yomi— By Rabbi Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis—Followed by Kiddush 8:30 AM

—Sof Zman K”S— 9:29 א”ג < 8:37 א”מ

 HEAT WARNING:
Please stay cool and hydrated 

Pirkei Avos - By Rabbi Teichman 7:30 PM

Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos 8:20 PM

Maariv - 9:26 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday— Fast Day

Fast Begins: 4:35am, Fast Ends: 9:18

Daf Yomi— By R’ Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis 8:30 AM

Mincha 8:10 PM

Maariv 9:00 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi— By R’ Teichman 5:45 AM

Shacharis

Monday, Thursday 6:40 AM

Tues. - Fri. 6:45 AM

Mincha (Mon –Thur) 1:45 PM

Mincha/Maariv 8:25 PM

Maariv (Mon-Thur) 9:45 PM

**Rabbi Teichman’s Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv**

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Issue#241

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Seize the Moment!

The credo of every Jew is embedded within a blueprint for Jewish life; the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Jewish Law.

The very first directive in *Shulchan Aruch*, that sets the foundation for the mission of fulfilling all the numerous details that follow, begins with the charge:

(א) ותברך אורי לעמוד בבוקר בעבודת בורא שיהא הוא מעורר את השחר (א"ח ס"א א סע"א) *One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning to serve his Creator, so that it is he who awakens the dawn!*

This strength of character inherent to the Jewish nation was ironically observed and admired by none other than Bilaam the Wicked. In absolute frustration he is compelled to articulate the inevitable truth:

(ב) וְגַם כִּבְיָא יָקוּם וְסֹאֲרֵי יִתְשֵׂא לֹא יִשְׁכַּב עַד אֲכַל טַרְף וּדְם הַלֵּיִם יִשְׂתֶּה (במדבר כ"ד) *Behold! the people will arise like a lion cub and raise itself up like a lion; it will not lie down until it consumes its prey, and drinks the blood of the slain.* This verse is the source for this opening statement in the *Shulchan Aruch*. (א"ח ס"א א סע"א) (שם)

The Midrash (תנחומים בלק ד) elucidates that this verse refers more specifically to their awakening from their slumber with alacrity each morning, like lions, **וְהַשֵּׁמֶשׁ קִרְאָת שֶׁנֶּעַם וּמְלִיכִים לְהַקְבִּי"ה**, "seizing" the opportunity to recite *Shma* in the morning, וכשלא לשון מפקד רוחו ביד הקב"ה, and when going to sleep at night, entrusting their soul to their creator with the saying of the Bedtime *Shma*.

The Talmud (ברכות י"ב) records that there was even a desire to insert into the body of the daily *Krias Shma* the "portion of Balak", due to its sentiments of praise related to the reciting of *Shma*, as expressed therein by Bilaam. It was only due to תרואה דציבורא רוחו ביד הקב"ה, "hardship on the community" of appending a lengthy addition to this prayer, that they refrained from doing so.

What are we extolling here? Is it the adherence to the *mitzvah* of reciting *Shma* per se, or is it the eagerness and swiftness that we display in our observance of His will in general?

Attendant to the reading of the portion of Balak is the onset of the "three weeks", commemorating the period in time that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple took place. The Talmud (שבט קט"ו) records the opinion of Rav Avahu who claimed that it was as a result of the neglecting the *mitzvah* of reciting the morning and evening *Shma*, that Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish nation went into exile.

He derives it from a series of verses in *Yeshaya*. (שעיה ה י"א-ג.)

וְהִי מִשְׁכִּינֵי בִבְקָר שֶׁכֶר יִרְדְּפוּ מֵאַחֵר בִּנְשֵׁף יוֹן דִּלְיָקָם *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may pursue strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!*

וְהָיָה כִּגְרוֹ וְנָבֵל תֵּחַ וְהַלֵּל וְרִין מִשְׁתֵּהוּ אֵת פֶּעַל ל' אֵל יִבְטוּ וּמְנַשֶּׁה דִּיו אֵל רֵא *And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of G-d, neither have they considered the operation of His hands.*

...לֹכַּ גִּלְה עֵמִי מִבְּלִידֵדֶשׁ... *Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge...*

It is not readily apparent from the cursory reading of these verses any clear evidence of their not having recited the daily *Shma*. It would seem that their sin was more associated with their indulgence in alcohol and partying. Perhaps they indeed recited their daily prayers and fulfilled their obligations and they were just more focused on the objective of drink and festivity.

Rashi on the verse that compares the Jewish nation to an "arising lion" utilizes that same phrase as the Midrash, **לְהוֹרֵף מִצִּיבֹת**, to "snatch *mitzvos*". What does this notion of "grabbing" a *mitzvah* connote?

Many of us live our daily lives according to natural assumptions. We daven, put on Tefillin, recite our prayers, study Torah and engage in acts of kindness. We wouldn't have it any other way, this is what we expect from ourselves. The question however remains, how many free willed choices do we make on any given day? How much real "choice" governs our actions. For the most part, most of us just "go with the flow" of life in accordance to the way we were brought up or have committed ourselves to.

Yet we can still choose. If we fight the urge to stay in bed and decide to arise out of initiative rather than waiting until that last inevitable snooze alarm goes off; at a point where we have no alternative but to get out of bed lest we miss Shul, carpool or work, then we have "grabbed" a *mitzvah*.

We can decide to do an act of kindness that we would otherwise "have to do", like assisting our spouses, or transform the duty to devote time to Torah study into an inspired activity, or transmute perfunctory prayer into a meaningful relationship by simply choosing to approach it with enthusiastic "choice" rather than inevitability. We must "seize" the moment in order to make it into the free willed act we were created for, thus giving it meaningful and enthused "life".

Rav Avahu sees in the verse in *Yeshaya* a description of a people who have set for themselves objectives other than those outlined in the Torah. They aren't necessarily prohibited ones nor activities that preclude our performance of our obligations to G-d. But when our day and its religious duties are merely the stepping stones to get to my "other" objectives, than they remain predictable and barren of "choice" and will never inspire us.

It is alleged in the name of one the greatest Jewish leaders of our generation, HaRav Aharon Kotler, that when children gaze at the clock during their morning studies, counting the minutes to recess, then the entire learning is valued as merely a instrument to eating lunch.

The declaration of *Shma* is commonly referred to as **קבלת עול מלכות שמים**, *accepting the yoke of Heaven*. This represents the ultimate expression of **בְּחִירָה**, *free willed choice*, the greatest strength man possesses, that no one can take away.

Whether we approach the beginning of our day as merely an encounter with the inevitable or as an opportunity to "seize the day", that is laden with endless possibilities, will determine whether we are created in the image of G-d or are mere lemmings marching towards extinction. When we "awaken the dawn" and "strengthen ourselves like a lion" we exercise that spark of divinity we are all invested with. With that choice we accept the "yoke of Heaven".

The last verse in *Yeshaya* defines the ultimate consequence of living life with superficial objectives, לֹכַּ, *Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge... living mindlessly!*

We created our own destiny by not investing our life with "choices". By doing *mitzvos* without contemplative purpose, we lost the enthusiasm associated with **בְּחִירָה**, free will. We succumbed to the mindless pursuit of that which naturally soothes, forsaking the joy that comes with emulating our Creator in making free willed choices. How we start our day sets into motion an attitude that pervades everything we do.

Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas teaches in Pirkei Avos (ג"א):

שָׁנָה שֶׁל שְׁמֵרָה, נִוָּן שֶׁל צְנֻרִים, וְשִׁתָּת הַלְּלִים, וְשִׁיבָת בְּתֵי קְבוּצוֹת שֶׁל עַמִּי הָאֶרֶץ, מִצִּיאָז אֵת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם:

Late morning sleep, midday wine, children's chatter, and sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant, remove man from the world.

Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas in this seemingly simple piece of advice, subtly alludes to the four areas we exhibit weakness.

We all want pine for creature comforts, who doesn't love to sleep an extra hour in the morning. We all love food and drink and the soothing sensation that accompanies it. We are all emotional beings, who like children, find a satisfying release of emotions when we chatter on end about our frustrations. And everyone needs a social group to belong to that provides one with a sense of self and belonging, although not always a healthy one.

It all begins with who takes control. Do I dare to choose. Do I arouse the dawn or does it seduce me into a deeper state of unconsciousness?

That lack of choice initiates a spiral downward that leads one towards overindulgence in food, uncontrolled emotion and precious time wasted in mindless social interactions. But man can face all these challenges and not only survive but thrive!

The saintly Imrei Chaim of Vishnitz revealed what the Holy Baal Shem Tov taught us regarding the key to greatness. Man need not submit oneself to pain in order to attain the curative and purifying power of suffering. The Baal Shem instructed that "אישער דער ווארענע אדאניע", even while "under the warm quilt", one can achieve the cleansing of "infliction", by "awakening the dawn", warding off the temptation to gaze in bed.

Furthermore he taught that one need not subject oneself to fasting in order to achieve atonement. One can "פאסטן ביי די שטענע", "fast while eating from the plate", by exhibiting thoughtfulness and self control, one can enjoy yet accomplish that which fasting can.

Additionally, he added, one need not always express ones deepest emotions outwardly in order to achieve the catharsis that comes with emoting. The Baal Shem conceived a notion of "דאנצטאנץ אין פּלאַץ", "dancing in place". One who senses the presence of G-d in his life can overflow with quiet emotion whether in joy or sorrow knowing that G-d hears like no other can.

Finally we can interact with people without allowing ourselves to be drawn in to the weaknesses that people so often find common comfort in. He displayed the concept of "התבודדות בין אנשים", "isolation among men". With G-d by our side we need no validation other than the realization that He is our greatest encourager.

We have a misconception that greatness lies in magnificent acts of sacrifice and devotion, when in truth it is at everyone's doorstep and at every experience. If only we would begin to appreciate the greatness invested in us by our loving Father in Heaven, who empowered us with the ability to live with inspiration and true joy every moment of our existence.

In this notion, lies the secret to our redemption. The choice is ours!

באהבה, צבי טייכמן



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R' Dovid & Yehudis Barer

On the birth of a GRANDSON!

Eliyahu Chaim Berkowitz
On his Bris this week!

!!Happy Birthday!!

To the following celebrating birthdays this week

Haddassa Kermaier

Info provided by YOU through our new member database

!!Happy Anniversary!!

Chaim & Leslie Klein

Attention Members: Shul Database

As you know, the Shul database and billing system is online at our web site. As we plan for the Yomim Noraim we ask that everyone take the time to login to the database and review:

- Open pledge and account standing -
- Personal data and family information -

Early participation in getting accounts up to date allows our Gaboim to prepare in advance and stabilizes our operating cash flow through the summer months.

~Thank you~