

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	→	7:00 PM
ON TIME SHABBOS:		8:10 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"Z-	9:35 א"ג <	8:59 מ"ז
Pirkei Avos		7:20 PM
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		8:10 PM
Maariv -		9:18 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM

Mincha / Maariv	8:15 PM
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Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
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Shacharis

Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM
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Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45 AM
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Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
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Mincha/Maariv	8:15 PM
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Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM
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**Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv**

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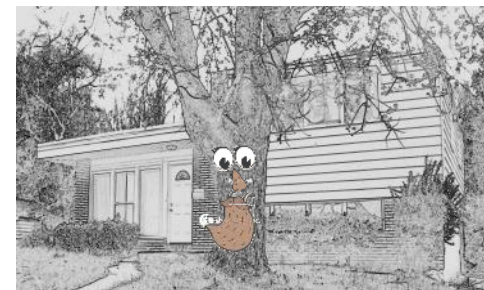
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Issue#243

Crying Over Spilled Blood

The Talmud (שבת לג) informs that as a consequence of the sin of שפיכת דמים murder, the Temple was destroyed and the Divine Presence departed from the land. This is based on the verse that states (במדבר לה לג-לד):

ולא תזנותנו אידהארך אשר אתם בה כי חדם הוא יתנוף אידהארך ולאך לאיכפר לדם אשר שפךבה כראם בדם שפכו: *You shall not bring guilt upon the land in which you are, for the blood will bring guilt upon the Land; the land will not have atonement for the blood that was spilled in it, except through the blood of the one who spilled it.*

ולא תטמא אידהארך אשר אתם ישיבים בה אשר אני שכן בתוכה כי אני ייחה שכן בתוך בני ישראל: *You shall not contaminate the Land in which you dwell, in whose midst I rest, for I am G-d Who rests among the Children of Israel.*

The implication being that G-d's continued "dwelling", i.e., His Presence in the Temple, is contingent on the land remaining uncontaminated of any taint of murder. Thus, the absence of His Presence, i.e., the destruction of the Temple, is a result of their murderous tendencies.

The word used here for "guilt", תניפה, is generally used to imply flattery and hypocrisy. Indeed, the Ramban understands the use of this verb here precisely in that way.

The context of these verses follow prior to those that warn us not to accept any ransom from an intentional or unintentional murderer to exonerate themselves from their prescribed punishments, death and exile respectively. The Torah therefore continues to discourage us from being intimidated by the murderer's social standing or political influence in releasing them from their due justice. We may not "flatter" them and must hold them fully accountable for their actions.

The Ramban goes on to explain that the term תניפה, means "to act contrary to all appearances". In this light he goes on to interpret the rest of the verse where it relates a measure for measure consequence for this obsequious behavior insofar as the earth too will be effected by this attitude, "ויתנוף את הארץ", and dupe us by giving forth great bounty that we will be unable to benefit from.

It seems that the sin being emphasized here is one more of duplicity rather than murder. Truth be told, many Rishonim (יראים סי' רבתי, רבני יונה שיע"ג קפו ועוד) count this verse among the 613 commandments, instructing us not to be two-faced in our dealings. How then do we understand this in light of the Talmud's previous claim that it is the sin of murder that drives G-d away?

The Holy Sifsei Cohen of Tzefas quotes a remarkable and very timely interpretation of this verse, that alludes to one of the terrible tragedies that we recall on Tisha B'Av. (קטנה יום אכפי לז) On the seventh day of Av, the chief of Nevuchadnezzar's army, Nevuzradan, began the destruction of Jerusalem. The walls of the city were torn down, and the royal palace and other structures in the city were set afire.

When Nevuzradan entered the Temple he found the blood of Zechariah continually bubbling and seething. He asked the Jews what this phenomenon meant, and they attempted to conceal the scandal, but he threatened to comb their flesh with iron combs. So they told him the truth: "There was a prophet among us who chastised us, and we killed him. For many years now his blood has not rested."

Nevuzradan said, "I will appease him." He then killed the members of the Great and Small Sanhedrins, then he killed youths and maidens, and then school children. Altogether, he killed 940,000 people at that juncture alone. Still the blood continued to boil, whereupon Nevuzradan cried: "Zechariah, Zechariah! I have slain the best of them; do you want all of them destroyed?" At last the blood sank into the ground.

At that moment, a desire to repent awoke within Nevuzradan. He said to himself, "if for a single life this is the punishment, how much worse will be the punishment for me who has killed so many people". He fled, sent a letter with an inventory and disposal of his possessions for his family and converted. (ביטין ט:)

The Sifsei Cohen points out that in our verse, לאיכפר לדם אשר שפךבה כראם בדם שפכו, the land will not have atonement for the blood that was spilled in it, except through the blood of the one who spilled it, the word בדם, the blood, is numerically equivalent to 46, alluding to the two Sanhedrei K'tanah, Smaller Courts, each consisting of 23 members, one situated at the Courtyard and one on the Temple Mount, that were slaughtered to atone for Zechariah's blood.

The next set of words כראם, except, equals 72 corresponding to number of judges in the Sanhedrei G'dolah, Larger Court, who too were butchered.

The first and last letters in the word שפך, was spilled, are equivalent to the value of בעוראדון, 320. The first letters of the phrase אדם שפכו, the blood of the one who spilled it (adding 1 for כולל; entire sentiment), are equal to זכריה וזהו דם זכריה, this is the blood of Zechariah, 304. Finally זכריה equals רבם, their teacher, the Teacher of Israel, 242.

This episode certainly suits the message implied from this verse as expressed in the Talmud regarding the severity of the sin of murder and its far reaching significance, but where does it reflect on the character flaw of flattery?

The Torah often uses the phrase שפיכת דמים, spilling of blood when referring to killing. Does that sentiment do justice to the taking of a life? נשמת נשמה, taking the soul, the expression used in the

Talmud, seems much more accurate in its implication and affect.

The act of taking a life is definitely most extreme amongst the categories of sin. But it never just starts with an impetuous act of selfishness, it begins when the seeds of devaluing another human take root. Spilling connotes a discarding of something, a lack of regard for the item being cast off. דמים, can also infer "value", thus the "spilling of blood" is the lack of appreciating someone else's worth.

When one acts with תניפה, duplicity, one is asserting a need to be primary while the person opposite me is merely secondary, to be used to achieve and advance "my" goals and objectives. Society often acts with decency solely because it is an expedient towards creating a facade of healthy interaction that makes people vulnerable, making them ripe to be taken advantage of.

We "kill" people with our attitude of degradation. It is only a matter of time that holds one back from eventually "discarding" another with the ultimate act of murder.

The murderer of Zechariah was the king Yehoash. He was seven years old at his coronation. His father Achazyah had died when he was only one year old and the queen Atalia (mother of Achazyah) proceeded to kill all descendants from the house of David to prevent them from becoming king allowing her to reign.

Yehoyada HaKohen together with his wife smuggled Yehoash from among the king's sons who were being killed. He remained with her in the Temple, hidden for six years while Atalia reigned over the land. The Midrash teaches us that during this time he lived above the הקדשים, Holy of Holies. Yehoyada HaKohen then started a revolt killing Atalia, and installing Yehoash as the next king.

Although initially "Yehoash did what was proper in the eyes of G-d all his days that Yehoyada the Kohen taught him" (מייב יב) Later on we are told: "King Yoash did not remember the kindness that Zechariah's father Yehoyada had done for him, and he killed his son" (ירמיה ב כז).

After Yehoyada died, the leaders of Yehuda came and prostrated themselves to the king. They treated him like a god, believing that only a god could remain in the Holy of Holies for such a long period and emerge alive. He accepted their claim and fashioned himself into an deity. However, "A spirit of G-d came over Zechariah son of Yehoyada the Kohen". He stood above the people and said to them: "thus said G-d: why are you transgressing the commandments of Hashem?" When Yehoash heard this he had Zechariah killed.

The pattern of flattery began when the people deified him. He reinforced it with ingratitude towards Yehoyada who saved him. It continued when he grievously overinflates his own worth on the expense of the precious soul of the Prophet, who dares to take him to task, and proceeds to spill his blood.

From that moment on, we are told that the blood of Zechariah began to seethe and continue to boil on the floor of the Temple for 252 years!

Evidently the nature of flattery and its resultant thickening of their skin became so embedded into the character of the nation that they continued to inure themselves to the powerful message that emanated from the Temple itself daily, going about the service oblivious to the reality.

Nevuzradan reacting to the incessant flow of Zechariah's blood realizes that it must be avenged. After dispensing enormous volumes of the most precious blood, he confronts Zechariah in bewilderment as to how he is not yet placated.

The Midrash (קהלת רבה ג טז) adds an additional sentiment that doesn't appear in the Talmud's account. Nevuzradan declares before Zechariah: "Is your blood more worthy than the blood of all these, that an entire nation should be destroyed for it?"

It was at that moment it ceased. It was within these words that the truth finally rang out. Every individual is valuable, no one can ever declare that one is more worthy than another. It wasn't Zechariah who was holding out for revenge, but rather G-d awaiting the moment they would "get it". The nation realized they were so caught up in their own needs they neglected to appreciate each other fully, killing each other in the process.

Nevuzradan comes to that revelation as well and concludes that he too can find his worth despite the myriads of souls he had extinguished, he repents and converts. We are taught that many of the great teachers in the academies of Eretz Yisroel and heads of Sanhedrin were his descendants.

Much blood among our nation continues to be spilled. We must avenge that blood by appreciating one another properly, valuing each of our individual greatness; not allowing ourselves to mockingly flatter others nor to overinflate our own worth.

When we open our eyes to each other with honesty, then G-d too will gaze directly into our eyes and bring us home once again.

for they shall see, eye to eye, Hashem returning to Zion.

באהבה,
צבי טייכמאן



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