

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	→	7:00 PM
Daf Yomi		7:30 AM
Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush		8:30 AM
-Sof Zman K"ס-	9:48 א"ג <> 9:12 מ"א	
Pirkei Avos		6:30 PM
Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos		7:20 PM
Maariv -		8:26 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday & Monday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	7:30 AM
Shacharis	8:30 AM
Mincha / Maariv	7:25 PM

Tuesday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman	5:45 AM
Shacharis	
Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM
Tues., Wed., Fri.	6:45 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Mincha/Maariv	7:25 PM
Daf Yomi (Take II)	9:00 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv

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Shul. Seating is limited and reservations will be
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Shul Contacts

@OhelMosheBaltimore.com

Rabbi Teichman

410-570-3333 or ravzt@hotmail.com

Gaboim:

Naftali Miller (Rishon) & Yossi Frydman (Sheni)- Gabbai@

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Rabbi Zvi Teichman

CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE
2808 SMITH AVE
BALTIMORE, MD 21209
WWW.OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM
DAVEN@OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM
(410) 878-7521

Issue#249

The Pursuit of Pleasure

Riding in my car the other day I couldn't help but notice a license plate proudly expressing, "LUVZDOGS". What was even more glaring, and disturbing, was the bumper sticker adjacent to it appealing to "MAKE ABORTION LEGAL". The whip cream on this piece of cake was another sticker immediately above it adorned with a caricature of an adorable forlorn dog, with the caption "WHO SAVED WHO?"

One can see one's life enhanced and saved by the rescue of a dog, who provides its owner renewed "meaning" and "purpose" in life and yet in the same breath call for the extinction of human life. It's a dog's life indeed.

How does man descend to such levels of confusion?

The Torah proscribes as an offering in the *House of Hashem*, "A harlot's hire or the exchange for a dog". (Devarim 23 19)

The commentaries struggle to understand the equating of these two items. The revulsion of harlotry and any association of it is obvious, but why is the item exchanged for the sale of a dog equally rejected?

The Talmud (Avoda Zara 17) reports of an attempt by the pagan authorities to coerce the "Great" Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos towards idolatry. Although he managed to escape he nevertheless saw the incident as a sign that he must have sinned in some manner to precipitate this incident. He was suddenly reminded of an encounter he had years earlier with a particular heretic, Yaakov of Kfar Sechanya, in the marketplace of Zippori.

The apostate had posed the following question to him: may one construct a lavatory for the use of the Kohen Gadol during the seven days prior to Yom Kippur, where he was sequestered in the Parhedrin Chamber on the Temple Mount, from material that was exchanged for the harlot's services. Rabbi Eliezer ignored his query. But the Talmud goes on to tell us that when he heard the heretic's own response: "they came from a place of filth let them go to a place of filth", he "enjoyed it". Rabbi Eliezer was convinced that this unwitting acknowledgement was the cause for his troubles.

What deeper significance lies beneath this cryptic tale?

We live in a world filled with many an opportunity for achieving pleasure. Is pleasure a commodity? Is it something every human is "entitled" to? We have become programmed and accustomed to measuring each experience and encounter in terms of "like" or "dislike".

The harlot represents the depraved notion of taking the most exquisite and elevated form of bonding and connection, that often serves as the metaphor for the most exalted relationship of that between man and his Creator, and placing a "price" on it, diminishing its lofty status by transforming it to the realm of "goods and services".

Pleasure is a gift from the Creator to enhance and give deeper meaning to our existence. It is not merely a goal to pursue but rather a privilege to receive.

When we lead meaningful and purposeful lives, pursuing kindness, nobility and spirit, there is a resulting gift of wholesome pleasure that is Divinely inspired. When however our objective in life is the pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake alone, we are denied that lasting quality of genuine joy and

are left with a temporal pleasure that quickly expires and leaves us unsatisfied.

A dog is man's best friend, always seeking to please his master. Indeed the Hebrew word for dog, *kelev* is a contraction of the sentiment *kulo lev*, all heart. But only as long as he hopes to be fed. (see Mahrasha Sanhedrin 97) What appears as a loyal aide is merely the desperate drive to stay sated and provided for. The dog's nature is to give only because its ultimate goal is to receive. The Talmud (Nedarim 24) describes the sentiment of one who wants to give and not only be a taker, in terms of "I am not a dog!"

Pleasure is neither a commodity nor the objective of existence, as reflected in the attitude of the harlot and the motivation of the dog. It is rather a Divine privilege we experience when we lead enthused lives.

Yaakov of Kfar Sechanya, was alleged to be a disciple of Yeshu. He saw pleasure as independent of spirituality and a necessary evil, that if one could avoid and shun, one should.

His comparison of the "filth" of the harlot to the "filth" of human waste underlined his skewed view of the world. He placed his notion in the context of the Kohen Gadol who isolated himself from his family, as additional evidence to his claim of holy "abstinence".

Indeed Rabbi Eliezer's pleasure in this heretics response encroached on the boundaries of heresy.

The love of and devotion to dogs can often be motivated by a love of self, a need for a "devoted" friend who provides distraction, fun and a relationship, but bereft of real and purposeful giving. It is at times a bonding where one echoes the character of the dog, in giving so as to receive.

When one allows oneself that delusion it can lead to devaluing human life outside of one's self and need. If a human life interferes with my world and my needs, it can be dispensed.

We must ask ourselves: how do we live our lives? Are we engaged in the commerce of life to "contribute" or is it merely an expedient to being a recipient of the benefits that living in society has to offer?

In the House of Hashem, the very microcosm of creation, there is no room for those who see pleasure as a finite and inevitable entity. In the House of Hashem everything has meaning and is a vehicle for a heightened awareness and connection to Him. Remarkably it is the excrement of the dog, that the Midrash says, was used in the tanning of hides used for Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzot. (Yalkut Shimoni Bo 187) There is nothing void of Hashem's existence.

May we measure our lives by this standard. If we live by the directive of the Torah and its goals we are assured to merit eternal pleasure.

We must choose whether we seek to live in a "dog house" or the House of Hashem!

B' Ahava,
Zvi Teichman

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To the following celebrating birthdays this week

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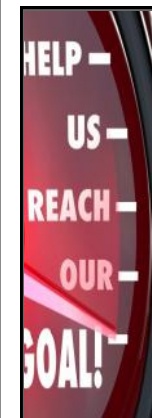
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Evening Daf Yomi

Monday—Thursday at 9PM

By Rabbi Teichman



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