

## SCHEDULE

### שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	7:00 PM
Shacharis— Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
Sof Zman K"ס מ"א 8:57 גר"א 9:33	
Pirkei Avos Shiur	7:35 PM
Mincha- Followed by Shalosh Seudos	8:10 PM
Maariv	9:20 PM

### Sunday

Shacharis	8:30 AM
<i>Followed by Shiur</i>	
-New Topics from יורה דעה, חולין	
Mincha / Maariv	8:20 PM

### Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

#### Shacharis

Monday, Thursday	6:40 AM & 8:10 AM
Tues, Fri.	6:45 AM & 8:10 AM

Wednesday ראש חודש 6:30 & 8:10 AM

Dirshu Halacha Program (Mon-Fri)	7:30 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thurs)	1:45 PM
Mincha / Maariv (Sunday-Wed)	8:20 PM
Shiur Sefer Da Es Atzmecha (M-T)	9:30 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thurs)	9:45 PM

Thursday Night Shiur by Rabbi Teichman After Maariv

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Volume #99



## RABBI'S MESSAGE

### Crossed Swords

The woeful tale of בלעם and the זקני מדין who successfully incited their nation to entice בני ישראל into succumbing to the temptations of their daughters and worshipping בעל פעור, comes to a conclusion with משה רבינו charging בני ישראל to exact their rightful revenge. In the battle, בלעם is slain by the "sword", ואת בלעם בן בעור הרגו בחרב, teaches us that his death by the method of the sword is mentioned to emphasize the nature of "measure for measure" in his punishment, for his having attempted to usurp the power of the פה that is unique to בני ישראל who wield the weapon of the העולם, of whom it is stated, על חרבך תחיה, who "live" by the sword, in bringing justice to him.

It would seem that this interpretation is indicated by the use of the word חרב, but what else should it have said, isn't that the weapon most commonly used?

It is fascinating to observe that throughout the entire תנ"ך wherever בני ישראל implements the use of a sword it always phrases it as "לפי חרב" as opposed to when the other nations employ it, it says בחרב or לחרב!

There are only two exceptions, here and when יעקב אבינו describes his having captured שכם, בחרב"י ובקשתי (בראשית מח, כב), by my sword and by my bow.

In the instance by יעקב the תרגום informs us that בחרב"י ובקשתי is referring to his wresting it through his prayers, בצלותי ובבעותי, with my supplication and my request, thus answering our query.

This anomaly would help us understand as well how רש"י knew that "בחרב" wasn't merely describing the natural means of death in battle, for if that were the case it would have stated the normative "לפי חרב". The stress "בחרב" implies the manner in which the other nations utilize it thus the lesson of מדה כנגד מדה.

What is the difference between these two terms and how does it reflect on the power of פה that is our rightful heritage?

The רמב"ן teaches us that although nowhere in the Torah is a directive given to kill בלעם nevertheless when the תורה commands בני ישראל "oppress the Midianites and smite them", כי צוררים הם לכם בנכליהם אשר נכלו לכם, "for they oppressed you through their guile that they beguiled against you", (to seduce you,) certainly this implies a death sentence as well for the chief strategist of this evil plan, בלעם!

It seems as if the "guile" more than the ultimate sin they lured them into, is what they are being taken to task for. This explains why מואב, who participated in the plan as well, is exempted from punishment, for only the plotters are being condemned.

Hashem instructs us that כל ערום בדעת יעשה (משלי יג, טו), all "cunning" act with forethought. In order to serve Hashem one must employ strategies and cunning in overcoming the evil inclination. One can not conquer weakness in one day, it takes thought and guile to devise plans that will lead to growth. One has to "deceive" the יצר הרע in avoiding his traps. In utilizing the physical world and its tools one must contemplate thoughtfully ones needs and capabilities in using them with proper balance. This is the hallmark of עבודת השם, the clever use of our strengths in overcoming our weaknesses. (The תרגום translates בערמה as בנכילו (יד)!(שמות כא, יד)!

When we pray, we present ourselves and our needs before the Creator, requesting what we feel are our requirements for success in serving Him. To simply ask without thought is childish and naive. תפילה is a moment of self reflection carefully placing our strategies for life before Hashem in hopes of reaching our goals. יעקב אבינו by בחרב"י as בחכמתי, with my "craft"!

חרב is a instrument of brute force, used by the other nations in a reflex action to protect their territories and lifestyles at all costs. לפי חרב, the תרגום translates as לפתגם דחרב, the dictum of the sword, implying a contemplative choice in using this instrument most effectively with thought and planning, the essence of a Jewish character.

When "cunning" is used as a strategy to entice towards sin, it is an abuse of this power of "פה", true expression of self. בלעם introduced to a world that only knew of savage assault, חרב, the power of subtle cunning, לפי חרב, in luring the enemy towards disaster in succumbing to instinctive passion. The מדרש describes how the Midianite women subtly lay traps of deception. An elderly matron would offer outside the stall wares for sale to unsuspecting men while a young temptress waited inside subsequently offering at a lower price similar merchandise, engaging in "innocent" business talk all the while slowly offering drink and food with all the "hechsherim" until ultimately luring her prey to sin. (במדבר כ, רבה כ)

בלעם and the inclination towards immorality can only be dealt with brutally and swiftly, חרב not בחרב! This then is the message of בלעם's demise through the agency of חרב. This is the מדה כנגד מדה, when he seeks to implement our strength of ערמה, subverting it to negative use, we must quash temptation with all or nothing force!

May we cleverly and contemplatively devise plans of success towards growth in עבודת השם yet deal swiftly with the subtle temptations we face daily that are so alluringly dangerous, and may Hashem answer our תפילות in achieving all our noble goals!

באהבה,

צבי טייכמן

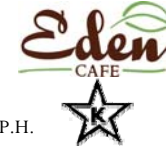
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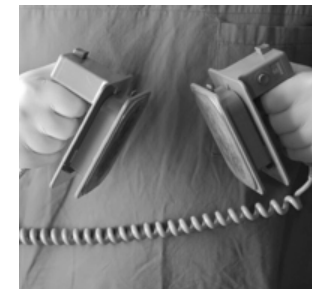


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