

Parshas Shelach

June 28, 2019

A Taste of Torah

Know It by Heart

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

It is well known that simple knowledge of Hashem is not automatically going to make someone an observant Jew. Furthermore, knowing what is right and wrong is by no means a guarantee to avoiding sin. We find that, even with commitment, one can still fall prey to the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) time and time again. While there is definitely more than one angle to this, in this week's parsha we find insight into how to serve Hashem faithfully and consistently.

The Torah warns us not to stray after the *Yetzer Hara*: "Do not stray after your eyes and after your hearts..." (Shelach 15:39) As a protection, the Torah gives us the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, as stated in the Torah, "In order that you remember and carry out all of My commandments." (ibid.:40) What does it mean to remember? Are we simply referring to the ability to recall and memorize the mitzvos? Furthermore, how are we to understand the idea that forgetting the mitzvos is a result of straying after the *Yetzer Hara*? Lastly, in what way do the *tzitzis* protect us from the *Yetzer Hara*?

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 35a) tells us that the court may not judge a case on Friday and deliver its verdict on Sunday (as the court does not convene on Shabbos) because the judges may forget their arguments from the first day of judgment. The Talmud continues that even though all the arguments are written down by two judicial scribes, they are only able to record the words that are spoken. However, the reasoning found in the heart of a person cannot be recorded and will thus be forgotten. In other words, although the judges will certainly be able to recall the

arguments with clarity, the intuitive grasp of the issues at hand possessed by the judges will be lost.

There is an innate understanding of an issue that cannot be expressed in words. The judges examine the facts, discuss, analyze, and everything is transcribed. But there is that intangible view of the entire case that is more than the words express, and that knowledge is required for the case to be properly judged.

Perhaps we can explain this with a story. It is told that a man once approached the Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1839-1933) with a halachic question. Instead of responding with a ruling, the Chofetz Chaim told the man to look inside the Mishnah Berura, a halachic work he had authored. He explained to the man that at the time he wrote his work, he had much greater clarity on the issue at hand. Does this mean the Chofetz Chaim did not remember the halacha? Based on the above idea, it can be explained that since he was not immersed in studying the question, he didn't feel he had the same clarity to properly issue a ruling.

On a similar note, we find that the Torah (Devarim 8:14) warns against falling prey to arrogance, "And your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem." Does the verse mean to say that when approached and asked Who is in charge of the world, the arrogant person would deny the existence of Hashem? Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz (1873-1936) explains that we are not referring to simply disregarding and completely forgetting the existence and presence of Hashem; rather, we are referring to the heart forgetting. It is this deeper, intuitive realization that

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Stories for the Soul

I Don't Like You Either

The first half of the 19th century saw a wave of immigration of European Jews, mostly students of the Gaon of Vilna, the Baal Shem Tov, and the Chasam Sofer; these Jews continued their arrival throughout the 19th century prior to the *aliyah* precipitated by political Zionism toward the end of the 19th century. These pious Jews eventually made their way to Jerusalem, where they established communities. However, life there was quite difficult; these Jews lived in great poverty and were often the victims of Arab and Ottoman persecution.

During this period, a Jew emigrated to Jerusalem from Poland. Conditions in Jerusalem were quite difficult, and after living there for some time, the man decided he was unable to remain living there. Before departing, though, he decided to consult with Rabbi Simcha Bunim Kalish (c. 1851-1907).

The fellow came to Rabbi Kalish and related the difficulties he was experiencing and his desire to return to Poland. Upon hearing the man's words, Rabbi Kalish sighed deeply and said, "Apparently, Jerusalem is not pleased with you. For if Jerusalem was pleased with you, you'd be pleased with Jerusalem."

The man took Rabbi Kalish's words to heart and decided to remain in Jerusalem.

In this week's parsha, the spies brought back a negative report about the Land of Israel, for that is what they saw. But a person's ability to see the greatness of the Land of Israel depends upon his own spiritual stature; if he is unworthy, he will not experience it.

Kollel Happenings

LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING THIS JULY 4

Start your day off on the right foot with Torah study! Join the Kollel for learning at three locations around Denver: At the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash, breakfast at 9 am followed by learning, Aish Denver, shacharis at 6:45 am and 8 am followed by breakfast and learning, and at EDOS, shacharis at 7:30 am followed by breakfast and learning.

SUMMER NIGHT SEDER FOR BACHURIM

Attention bachurim in Denver over the summer! The Kollel is once again holding its Summer Night Seder for Bachurim at the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash. Sunday-Thursdays. Night seder begins at 8 pm, with ma'ariv at 9:10 pm. Stipends available for boys who maintain the sederim. For further details, info or sponsorship opportunities, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at Edos, 198 S. Holly St. at 12:00 pm. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Which custom of ours is based on the Talmud's restriction of reading *Kesuvim* (Writings) on Shabbos?

A: Towards the end of *Birchas Hamazon* (Grace after Meals), a verse from Tehillim (Psalms 18:51) is recited which begins with the word *magdil*, (makes) great. There is a custom to alter the text on Shabbos to *migdol*, a tower, based on a similar verse in Shmuel (Samuel II 22:51). Many suggestions have been offered as to why this change is made. The Rogatchover Gaon (Rabbi Yosef Rosen; 1858-1936)

had a novel approach. Since Tehillim is in *Kesuvim*, the alternate verse from Shmuel (which is part of *Nevi'im*, Prophets) was substituted!

Source: Shu"t Tzafnas Pane'ach 2:5:3.

This week's question: Some of the *brachos* (blessings) we recite have alternative versions for special occasions (e.g., when Rosh Chodesh or Yom Tov coincide with Shabbos). There are two *brachos* which have a singular and plural form; can you name them?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part VIII

On June 12, 1912, Rabbi Silver and the rest of the delegation met with President Taft. The meeting was the impetus for a decades-long friendship between Rabbi Silver and the Taft

family. Taft, who was running for reelection at the time (he eventually lost), asked Rabbi Silver for advice on how to win the Jewish vote. Rabbi Silver responded, "Be a Zionist!"

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Hashem is with a person at all times that will be lacking due to arrogance.

The Torah says (Devarim 4:9) regarding the Divine Revelation of the Torah, "Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life." In this verse, says Rabbi Levovitz, the Torah is warning us to beware of both types of forgetting, 1) forgetting the facts and 2) the heart forgetting.

With this idea, Rabbi Levovitz says, we can explain the Torah's warning not to stray after our hearts and eyes but rather remember the mitzvos by seeing the *tzitzis*. We are not referring to literally forgetting the mitzvos of the Torah; rather, we are referring to the forgetfulness of the heart, the loss of the intuitive knowledge of the importance of the mitzvos. It is only when we live with Hashem in our hearts that we can truly

understand what Hashem wants from us. However, if we stray after our hearts and follow the *Yetzer Hara*, although we may still have an intellectual awareness of all the mitzvos, that knowledge will no longer be present in the heart and will not prevent one from sinning.

How can we make sure to keep this internal awareness alive and protect ourselves from forgetting and straying after the *Yetzer Hara*? The Torah gave us the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, about which it says "and you shall see them and remember Hashem." (Shelach 15:39) When one makes sure to have *tzitzis* on his garment, they are always there, visible, driving home the awareness of Hashem and His mitzvos and preventing forgetfulness, providing us a constant reminder of Hashem. By constantly seeing our *tzitzis* and remembering Hashem, we can live with Hashem - in our hearts - and protect ourselves from straying after the *Yetzer Hara*.