



MENUCHA V'SIMCHA

Candle Lighting 7:24PM

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Parshas Shoftim 5777

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS

BY RABBI YOSEF PRUPAS

In this week's parsha we are taught a halacha that seems to defy common logic - the halacha of "eidim zomimin." Eidim Zomimin are witnesses who testify, for example, that they witnessed a murder. If prior to carrying out the supposed murderer's death sentence two other witnesses testify that the original two witnesses were at a different location at the time of the murder, the original two receive the intended punishment of their victim. However, if the death sentence has already been meted out, there is no retribution to the original two false witnesses. The Torah expresses this unique halacha with the words "Ka'asher zamam la'asos," which the Talmud explains to mean that it is only as they "intended" to do, but not if it was already done. This halacha has led to much discussion among the commentators as to the reason behind this seeming paradox.

The Maharal explains that its understanding lies at the end of the verse - "u'viarta harah mikirbecha," "and you shall destroy the evil from your midst." The source of evil in this case is the intent to harm the individual the witnesses falsely testify against. It is only a thought, there is no tangible action on their part that brings about the murder. A thought exists as long as it is there. Once it stops it no longer exists. Therefore, in the case of eidim zomimin, the Torah is telling us to get rid of the evil as long as it has a presence. Once the sentence is carried out - their evil intent ceases, and the commandment to remove the evil is no longer pertinent. The technicalities of

the halacha reveal a much deeper reality of the power of thought. The Maharal explains:

"The real reason for this law is something wondrous. One must understand the words "k'asher zamam" itself. The intention to do something to someone else turns back on himself.

When the person was already killed, there is no thought to turn back on the original person."

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The Maharal goes on to say that according to the Torah, a misplaced intention to harm another will always turn back on its origin. We find this explicitly by the evil Haman. The verse in Megilas Esther (9:25) states "But when she (Esther) appeared before the king, the evil thought intended for the Jews returned on his (Haman's) head..." Similarly the Talmud tell us in tractate Shabbos (97a) that one who suspects others of a misdeed (incorrectly) will be stricken himself. The Maharal explains with a parable of two boats, one trying to sink the other. If the second boat is stronger than the boat trying to ram it and bring it down, the result will be that the first one will sink. A misplaced thought, will turn on its originator.

At this time of year, the above brings to mind the statement of our sages in tractate Yoma (29a) "Hihurei aveira kashu mei'aveira," "Thoughts of sin are worse than sin itself." A thought can be worse than the act. Some commentaries explain that thought originates from the essence of a person, from the holiest within him,

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DVAR HALACHA



Laws of Chodesh Elul

part 1

BY RABBI YOCHANAN ESKENAZI

The forty day period beginning Rosh Chodesh Elul through Yom Kippur is a period that is an es ratzon (an auspicious time), a time that our teshuva (repentance) is more easily accepted. There are allusions to this in Tanach: Ani L'dodi V'dodi Le (I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is mine) [Shir Hashirim 6:3]. Furthermore, the Torah [Devarim 30:6] states "U'mul Hashem Elokecha Es L'avcha V'es Lev Zar'echa" (Hashem your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring). The first letters of the highlighted words are Alef, Lamed, Vuv, Lamed, which spells Elul. Additionally, the gematria (numerical value) of the end letters [of Ani L'dodi V'dodi Le- four letter yuds] equals to forty [10 x 4] which hints to that there are 40 days that Hashem is close (Mishneh Berurah 581: introduction).

Many people have their tefillin and mezuzos checked during the month of Elul (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:3). Additionally, some have the custom to recite ten chapters of Tehillim (Psalms) each day during Elul, in order to complete the entire Sefer Tehillim two times before Rosh Hashanah (Mishneh Berurah 581:1). If possible, it is better not to recite Tehillim at night [during Elul and the rest of the year] (Koveitz Halachos 1:10).

One who writes a letter to a friend during the month of Elul should include wishes for a k'siva v'chasima tova (you should be inscribed for a good year) (Mateh Ephraim 581:9 & Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:2). In our day and age, if one is writing an email to a friend

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KOLLEL News

MAZEL TOV TO:

RABBI SRULI AND RIVKA SCHWARTZ ON THE BIRTH OF A SON. THE SHALOM ZACHAR WILL BE AT THEIR HOME 158 NORTH LATCHES LANE IN BALA CYNWYD THIS FRIDAY NIGHT FROM 8:30 PM - 11:00 PM.

OUR ALUMNUS, RABBI MORDY AND MRS. MIRIAM GROSS, ON THE BAR MITZVAH OF THEIR SON, MOSHE LEIB.

MRS. DALE DUNOFF ON THE BIRTH OF HER GRANDDAUGHTER, CHANA, BORN TO HER CHILDREN, AVRAMI AND AYALA GROSS.

BINYOMIN AND NOMI GOLDSTEIN ON THE BRIS OF THEIR SON, NOSSON YEHOSHUA.

YONATAN AND MICHAL FRANKEL ON THE BIRTH OF A BABY GIRL. MAZEL TOV TO THE PROUD GRANDPARENTS, SHERMAN AND SUSAN FRAGER AND MARK AND JUDY FRANKEL.

CONDOLENCES TO:
FRANCINE LIPSTEIN ON THE PASSING OF HER MOTHER, MRS. SALLY SILBERSTEIN CHASE (A'H).

- New Kollel Elul Zman In Session!

All regular chavrusos and shiurim have resumed. Please be in touch with your chavrusah to confirm that you will be resuming with your previous schedule. If you do not yet have a chavrusah, or to explore the myriad learning opportunities we have available throughout the week, please contact Rabbi Zeffren (yoelz@verizon.net) or our Director of Community Programming, Rabbi Yosef Prupas (yosefprupas@phillykollel.org).

- New for Elul! 5-Minute Mussar Shiur Before Maariv

In an effort to capitalize on the auspicious time of Elul and earn merit for a kesiva vechasima tova, we will be starting a new, 5-minute shiur before

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menuchavesimcha@phillykollel.org

DAVENING TIMES:

Friday, August 25:

7:24PM	Candle Lighting
7:42PM	Shkiya/sunset

Shabbos, August 26:

8:15AM	Shacharis
9:06AM/9:42AM	Latest Krias Shema
<i>Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by The Deutscher Family in appreciation of Chasdei Hashem And in honor of Mrs. Deutscher's grandfather Mr. Heshy Adler who is visiting for Shabbos</i>	
6:30PM	Mincha
7:41PM	Shkiya/Sunset
8:36PM	Ma'ariv
8:53PM	72 Minutes

maariv each night. The shiur will offer practical insights into perfecting our avodas Hashem. The shiur will take place in the Beis Medrash from 9:50-9:55.

-Women's Oneg Shabbos This Shabbos!

Attention ladies: Join the Kollel women at a special Oneg Shabbos This Shabbos Afternoon, Parshas Shoftim 5:00-6:30 pm at the Zeffrens, 111 Bryn Mawr Avenue.

Enjoy good company, Shabbos treats, and neighborhood camaraderie.

- Can't Wait for Shviti?

Our fabulous Shviti program will return IY'H Shabbos afternoon, September 9th, when they begin Hilchos Sukkah.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

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who he does not intend to speak to again before Rosh Hashanah should include wishes for a good year (Rabbi Biberfeld, shlit'a).

The shofar is blown during the entire month of Elul, since hearing the shofar arouses a person to repent (Rama 581:1). The prevalent custom is to blow the shofar in the morning after davening shachris (Aruch Hashulchan 581:1). If there is no adult available, a katan (boy younger than 13 years old) may blow the shofar (Koveitz Halachos 1:18). One does not need to stand while the shofar is being blown (Koveitz Halachos 1:17). If the congregation forgot to blow shofar in the morning, it is proper to blow by mincha (Igros Moshe OC 4:21:5). If an individual missed hearing shofar, it is proper for him to blow himself or hear from someone else, although it is not obligatory (Koveitz Halachos 1:21). If one is davening shemoneh esrei while the shofar is being blown, it is proper to pause and concentrate on the shofar (Koveitz Halachos 1:22).

The minhag is to recite the chapter "L'Dovid Hashem orei v'yeeshee" [Tehillim 27] from Elul until Shmeinei Atzeres (Mishneh Berurah 581:2). Anyone who says this paragraph from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Simchas Torah is able to nullify bad decrees against him and merit being innocent in judgment (Sefer Shloshim Yom Kodesh Hachag pg. 3 fn. 6 quoting Sefer Sheim Katan). One should recite it at the end of davening, after the shir shel yom [and after barchi nafshe on Rosh Chodesh] (Mishneh Berurah 581:2). However, there are different customs regarding which tefillah to say L'Dovid. Some congregations say it after Shachris and Mincha (Mishneh Berurah 581:2) while others say it after Shachris and Maariv (Alef Ha'magen 581:10). One who is davening in a minyan that says it during a different tefillah than he is accustomed to saying it, is not required to say it together with them (Shloshim Yom Kodesh Hachag pg. 3 fn. 8 quoting Shu"T Divrei Moshe 1:35).

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and it is defiled by that bad thought. Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner tell us that although the process of repentance requires regret for the action of sin and acceptance not to repeat it in the future, it is praiseworthy for one to uproot the source of what brought about the possibility of sin itself.

We learn this from the fact that Rosh Hashana is on the day, according to one opinion "man" came into being, or first day of creation of world whose purpose was to serve mankind. And from the fact that the attribute of Teshuva/repentance is rooted in the Name of G-d- the Name that speaks to the creation of the world (as opposed to other attributes of G-d, e.g. kindness, truth, etc.) This

teaches us the core of Teshuva, as the Rambam explains in the Laws of Teshuva, lies in the fact that a person must reinvent himself a result. It is not only his actions that matter, but his thought process itself. We can now understand the power and far-reaching consequences of the going-ons in one's mind. For this reason we call out to G-d "mima'makim," from the depths of our being for forgiveness, realizing that we must change from inside out.

May we understand our thought process and direct them in a positive direction for ourselves and towards our people.

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