



# Menucha v'Simcha



A PARSHA WEEKLY BY THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY KOLLEL

Candle Lighting: 7:31 p.m.

**Parshas Shoftim 5775**

Vol. 11 Issue. 33

## DVAR TORAH

### 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.” 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, 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. 

## DVAR HALACHA

### Halachos of Elul

By Rabbi Yochanan Eskenazi

The 40 day period beginning *Rosh Chodesh Elul* thru *Yom Kippur* is a period that is an *es ratzon* (an auspicious



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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'avvcha V'es Lev Zar'echa*” (*Hashem* your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring). The first letters of these 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*- 4 letter *yuds*] equals to 40 [10 x 4] which hints to that there are 40 days that *Hashem* is close (*Mishneh Berurah* 581: introduction).

There is a custom to recite 10 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). Additionally, many people have their *tefillin* and *mezuzos* checked during the month of *Elul* (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:3).

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). Therefore, if one is speaking to or writing an email to a friend 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 ore 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 Kodem 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).

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 Kodem Hachag* pg. 3 fn.8 quoting *Shu"t Divrei Moshe* 1:35).

## Kollel News

**Friday, July 17:**

7:31 p.m.: Candle Lighting

7:49 p.m.: Shkiya/sunset

**Shabbos, July 18:**

8:15 a.m.: *Shacharis*

9:05/ 9:41 a.m.: Latest Krias Shema

Ramban Shiur by Rabbi Eskenazi

6:00 p.m.: Mincha

7:48 p.m.: Shkiya/ Sunset

8:43 p.m.: Ma'ariv.

9:00 p.m.: 72 minutes

**Mazel Tov To:**

**Mr. Ezra and Susan Wohlgelernter** on the birth of their granddaughter, Aviva Gluck!

**Pichas and Orah Fried** on the Bris of their son, Gavriel Leib!

**Dr. Israel and Inna Pendrak** on the engagement of their son Yaa-kov to Chana Basya Weinberg of Lakewood, NJ!

**Condolences To:**

Mrs. Kristine Schulman and family on the passing of her father, Martin Glasser.

## Community Partnership Sefer Torah:

In conjunction with the Community Partnership Sefer Torah Campaign of the Philadelphia Community Kollel, we will be holding a hands-on demonstration for **children and adults**, on how a Sefer Torah is made.

**This Monday**

**August 24, 2015**

**10:00 am**

**Lower Merion Synagogue**

Sofer, Rabbi Betzalel Katkovsky will Present:

**THE MAKING OF A SEFER TORAH**

For more information, please contact Rabbi Yosef Prupas at:

**610-618-9949 or yosefprupas@phillykollel.org**

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