

בעזרת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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Ki Seitzei



The Way of Emunah

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Parshas Ki Seitzei

Defeating the Yeitzer Hara With Emunah/Fighting for Vengeance/Marriage as a Strategy Against the Yeitzer Hara/The Son of the Hated Wife is Always the Firstborn/Like Father Like Son/Unbecoming for an Old Man/Every Jew Can be Fixed/One Who Helps Others Helps Himself/The Enemy Becomes Like a Brother/A Proud Heart to Serve Hashem/The Lowly Tzitzis/Exact Scales Create Wealth/The World Can Not Exist With Only Goodness/It Is Good to Trust in Hashem/Thieves Have no Emunah/How to Stop Smoking/Every Tefillah Makes an Impression/Saving an Avreich from the Depths of Purgatory

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אִיְבֶיךָ וַיִּתְּנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ וְגו' (כא, י)

When you go out to war on your enemy and Hashem, your G-d, will give them in your hands... (21:10)

Defeating the Yeitzer Hara With Emunah:

The Ahavas Shalom explains this *pasuk* as follows:

“When you go out to war on your enemy.” This is referring to when a person readies himself to fight a war against his true enemy, the *yeitzer hara*. One should not think the *yeitzer hara* is too strong to defeat in every

battle. Rather, he should believe that he can always be “on his enemy”, meaning that he can end up on top of him if he tries hard enough to overcome. **The more *emunah* one has that he can win this war, the more victorious he will be** and “Hashem will give him over in your hands...”

We see from this that the main

way to beat the *yeitzer hara* is through having *bitachon* that Hashem will help you defeat him.

Fighting for Vengeance:

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh asks why the Torah needs to start the story of an *isha yefas to'ar* by saying at length about how you will go out to war against your enemy and capture captives, etc. Why can't it just start off by saying: "If you see amongst your captives, a woman..." He also asks why it has to say that you will fight a war "against your enemy". Who else would one fight a war against if not his enemy?

He answers that an *isha yefas to'ar* is forbidden in all circumstances except for times off war. The same is true of

certain foods that are only permitted to be eaten in times of war (see Chulin 17A). Since this is true, one might suspect that when Jews go to war, they will run to take advantage of the opportunity to commit sins in a permitted way. For this reason, the Torah says that one should only go out to war with intentions to mete out vengeance against "your enemy", which means the enemy of Hashem, as is seen from the verse (Tehillim 139:21): "I hate those who hate Hashem... They are enemies to me." One is only permitted to go to war for this reason.

After this introduction, the Torah relates that once one wins such a war, that was fought with good intentions, he may take an *isha yefas to'ar* from amongst the captives. However, if one goes to war for any other reason,

Hashem will not give his prohibition will never be enemies into his hands and this permitted.

וְרֵאִיתָ בַּשְּׁבִיָּה אִשָּׁת יָפֶת תֹּאֵר וְגו' וְלָקַחְתָּ לָּךְ לְאִשָּׁה: (כא, יא)

And you will amongst the captives a good-looking woman...and you will take her for a wife. (21:11)

Marriage as a Strategy Against the Yeitzer Hara:

Chazal say that the Torah is “only speaking in opposition to the *yeitzer hara*.” Sefer Toldos Yaakov Yosef explains this to mean that **the best way to fight**

the *yeitzer hara* is to “take her for a wife”, meaning to get married. Once a person is busy running a household and supporting a family, he won't have time to look for ways to sin or to fritter away his life.

כִּי תִהְיֶינָה לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים הָאֶחָת אֲהוּבָה וְהָאֶחָת שְׂנוּאָה וְגו' וְהָיָה הַבֵּן הַבְּכוֹר לְשִׁנְיָאָה (כא, טו)

When a man has two wives – one who is beloved and one who is hated - and the first son is born to the hated one. (21:15)

The Son of the Hated Wife is Always the Firstborn:

The Abarbanel notes that the *pasuk* doesn't say “if the first son is born to the hated wife”; rather, it says that he will be born to her,

as a statement of fact. He explains that if a man has one wife that he loves and one that he hates, **the firstborn son will always come from the hated wife, as Hashem will have mercy on her just like he had on Leah, whom he granted a**

firstborn son because she was “hated” (Bereishis 29:31). This is in accordance with the dictum that

כִּי יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ בֶּן סוֹדֵר וּמִוֹרֶה אֵינָם שֹׁמְעֵי בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל אִמּוֹ וְגו' וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם (כא, יח)

When a man has a wayward and rebellious son who does not listen to the voice of his father and to the voice of his mother and they warn him and he does not listen to them. (21:18)

Like Father Like Son:

The Munkatcher Rebbe zy”a (Sefer Tiferes Banim) writes that this *pasuk* teaches us how to properly raise children to remain upright and not to veer from the proper path.

If someone takes his sons to shul, where he they see their father davening with *kavanah*, they will desire to emulate him. They too will want to daven with devotion. But if they see their father wasting time in shul, not davening, and just staring into space, they will follow his example and do the same.

When the family is at home, if the children see their parents not taking Yiddishkeit seriously, not making *brachos* and *bentching* in a serious way, not saying Asher Yatzar or Kriyas Shema before going to bed, etc., they will take that as a lesson for themselves. Even if their parents chastise them and try to pressure them to behave properly, they will not listen to them. They will do as their parents do, and not as their parents tell them to do.

He says that this idea is hinted to in the words (Tehillim 145:21): “My mouth will speak the praise of Hashem, and all flesh will

bless His holy name forever and ever.” **If one speaks praises of Hashem with his own mouth, then “all flesh”, meaning his children, will also bless Hashem, as they will follow their father’s example.**

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that the reason a person has a *ben sorer u’moreh* who abandons the ways of the Torah is because “he does not hear the voice of his father and the voice of his mother.” He does not hear his parents’ voices used for davening, saying Kriyas Shema

or *brachos*, which is he “turns away and does not listen to them.” Even if they rebuke him and tell him what to do, he will not obey them.

We all know that raising children is not an easy job. It takes a lot of effort, a lot of tears, and a lot of money. In order to have good children, one needs to work hard. **But the Torah gives us the best advice for how to do this. Being a good role model is the best way to raise upright children.**

לֹא תִרְאֶה אֶת שׁוֹר אֶחָיִךְ אוֹ אֶת שֵׂי וְהִתְעַלְמָתָם מִקֶּדֶם וְגו' (כב, א)

You shall not see your brother's ox or sheep straying, and ignore them... (22:1)

Unbecoming for an Old Man:

Chazal say (Bava Metzia 30A) that from the words “and ignore them” we see that some people are supposed to ignore a lost

object. Those who are exempt from the mitzvah of *hashavas aveidah* are a kohen when the lost item is in a cemetery, an old man for whom it is not according to his dignity, or a case where

one has his own work to do that is more valuable than the lost object.

It is related that Rav Akiva Eiger *zt"l* once visited a certain city and the first thing he did upon arrival was to go visit a relative who lived there.

When he was asked why he had to go to his relative, rather than having him come to the place where he was staying, he answered: "The *pasuk* states: 'You shall not your brothers' ox...and ignore them.' Chazal learn from this that there are times when you should ignore the lost animal, such as when one is elderly and is not befitting for him to tend to it. However, the verse also states (Yeshaya 37:7): 'You should not ignore your flesh and blood.' For this commandment, there is no exemption for an elderly man.

This teaches us that everyone must make the effort to draw his relatives close, even if it is unbecoming for him."

Every Jew Can be Fixed:

The Chasam Sofer learns this *pasuk* to be teaching us that Hashem opens the doors of *teshuva* for every Jew, even the lowliest person, allowing everyone to return to Him.

He explains it as follows: "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep straying and ignore them." This can be understood to mean that one should not see a fellow Jew straying from the proper path and ignore him because he thinks there is no hope for the sinful individual to ever do *teshuva*. Even if the person has strayed extremely far, to the extent that "your brother is

far from you and you don't know him (ibid:2)" because he is so far gone, still and all: "You should gather him into your house" and draw him close.

This is what Rav Yochanon did for Reish Lakish (Bava Metziah 84A) and what Hillel did for the

man who wished to convert (Shabbos 31A). And one should do this "until your brother seeks you out", meaning until he comes to seek a way to do *teshuva*. And then "you shall return him" to the ways of Hashem.

לֹא תִרְאֶה אֶת חֲמֹר אֶחִידֶךָ וּגְו' וְהִתְעַלְמָתָ מֵהֶם הֲקִים תְּקִים עִמּוֹ (כב, ד)

You shall not see your brother's donkey... and ignore them. You shall pick up with him. (22:4)

One Who Helps Others Helps Himself:

Rav Yitzchok of Vorka zy"va asks why it says to pick up "with him" (*imo*), rather than saying to "pick him up" (*oso*). He further asks why the Torah says a repetitive "double *lashon*" of "*hakim takim*".

He answers that the word is repeated to teach us that if you pick up and support your friend, you will also be picking up

yourself, as Chazal say (Bava Kama 92A): "If one asks for mercy for his friend... he is answered first." Thus, one is picking himself up "with him."

In a similar vein, the Sefas Emes explains that **when one helps his friend, he rectifies himself and improves his own character.** Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that if one lifts up his friend in order to assist him, he lifts up his moral character "with

him.” This is in accordance to Chazal’s statement (Vayikroh Rabbah 34:10) that “a poor man does more for a householder than the householder does for the poor man.”

We see that whenever someone does a favor for someone else, he gains more from it than the recipient of the favor. The opposite is also true. When one hurts someone else, he hurts himself even more.

The Enemy Becomes Like

גְּדִלִים תַּעֲשֶׂה לָךְ עַל אַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת כְּסוּתְךָ וְגו' (כב, יב)

You shall make yourself twisted threads on the four corners of your garment.

(22:12)

A Proud Heart to Serve

Hashem:

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a states that while the word “gedilim” means “threads”, it

a Brother:

Rabenu Bechaya asks why this verse refers to the donkey of “your brother”, whereas in Parshas Mishpatim (Shemos 23:5), where the same mitzvah is described, it makes mention of the donkey of “your enemy.” He answers that this teaches us that **if one helps another person, even if that person is his enemy, he will come to look at him as “his brother”, as helping someone else eradicates the hate.**

also connotes “*gedulah*”, greatness. Accordingly, the *pasuk* can be translated to mean that **one should make himself large and proud to serve Hashem with an uplifted heart.**

One should never think he is too small and humble to serve Him.

The Lowly Tzitzis:

Sefer Divrei Yisroel (Parshas Metzorah) quotes his grandfather, Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir zy”a,

as asking why the *bracha* we recite when we put on a *talis* is “*l’hisatef b’tzitzis*” (to wrap in *tzitzis*), rather than “*l’hisatef b’talis*.” He answers that the *tzitzis* are lowly and close to the ground; therefore, they are the main thing and are fitting to be blessed.

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה וְגו' (כה יד)

You shall not keep in your house two different efa measures... (25:14)

Exact Scales Create Wealth:

The Avnei Nezer of Sochatchov zy”a would warn his *chassidim* to make sure not to cheat any customer – even a non-Jew - by using faulty scales or weights. A *chasid* once asked for his advice regarding what type of business he should open. The Avnei Nezer told him that he could open any type of store that he wanted. He ended up opening a store next

door to a big factory that employed many workers, who frequented his store and bought his merchandise. With this customer base, he did a lot of business. However, when he calculated the amount of money that went in and out, he discovered that he hadn’t made any profit. He didn’t know why this was or what to do, so he returned to the Rov to ask his advice.

The Avnei Nezer told him, “Try to remember, did you ever cheat anyone with a faulty weight or scale?”

The man nodded and said that he sometimes allows himself to use faulty weights when selling to non-Jews. The Avnei Nezer said, “The Torah says: ‘It shall not be to you.’ You will not have *parnassah* if you use false scales or weights. Since you did this, you were unable to make a profit.”

The World Cannot Exist With Only Goodness:

Rav Yitzchok of Vorka zy”a once delivered a *drasha* about the importance of honesty in business. He criticized the practice of milkmen who water down the milk or grocers who put salt into the sugar and the

like. He concluded by saying, “The *pasuk* says that one who does not do things like that will merit a long life. How can anyone not take that seriously?”

There was a milkman who was present during the speech. He realized that he had been acting wrongly, as he had always watered down his milk. He decided then and there never to do that again. However, the next day his customers complained that his milk didn’t taste as good or became spoiled.

The milkman approached the Rebbe and told him that he had done what was right but it had ruined his milk! The Rebbe told him, “You should know, my son, that since the sin of the *eitz hadaas*, good and bad are mixed together, and the world cannot live with only goodness. What you should do is to put one drop

of water into the milk fulfill the obligation to have a bit of bad mixed with the good.”

It Is Good to Trust in Hashem:

Rav Moshe Chaim Rothenberg *zt”l*, the brother of the Chidushei Harim, was a wealthy and generous *chasid*. A poor man once approached him with a letter from the Kotzker Rebbe *zy”a*, which contained a request to generously help this man with the wedding expenses for his daughter.

Rav Moshe Chaim read the letter but he only gave the man one ruble and wished him well. The poor man was shocked by how small the donation was, and he said, “My travel expenses alone were much more than one ruble!”

But Rav Moshe Chaim would not give him any more money and, with no other choice, the man left his home with a broken spirit. As he walked out the door, he realized that he couldn’t rely on anyone other than Hashem to help him.

A few seconds later, he saw Rav Moshe Chaim’s attendant running after him. The attendant handed him a large amount of money, enough to cover all the wedding expenses. The poor man was now flabbergasted, and he decided that he had to go back and ask Rav Moshe Chaim for an explanation.

He knocked on his door and asked him, “Why did you first give me such a small donation and then such a large one? Did you change your mind about how much you wanted to give?”

Rav Moshe Chaim replied, “When you first came with the Rebbe’s letter, I could see that you were relying on me and that you thought I’d certainly give you the full amount you needed. It seemed like you had forgotten that there is a G-d who is the only One you should rely on. Therefore, I sent you away with very little so that you would remember that you should only trust in Hashem, and then I gave you the full donation.”

Thieves Have no Emunah:

The Imrei Emes zy”a (Parshas Vayeishev) writes in the name of Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a that if a thief would have *emunah*, his loot would be brought to his house for him. However, since they have no

emunah, they have to do it in a hidden, forbidden way.

How to Stop Smoking:

Rav Akiva Eiger zt”l once met a wealthy man who was smoking a cigarette and clearly enjoying it very much.

He asked him, “Why do you need this?”

The rich man said, “I eat a lot of heavy, good food. When I’m full, the cigarette really hits the spot.”

A while later, Rav Akiva met a poor butcher, who also was smoking. He thought to himself: This poor man certainly doesn’t eat fatty foods. So what enjoyment does he get from the cigarette? He asked him about it, and the man said, “I sometimes get very hungry but have no money to buy enough food to get

full. The smoke stills my hunger and makes me feel less starving.”

The *gaon* said, “I don’t get it. The rich man needs to smoke because he is so full, and the

poor man needs to smoke because he’s so hungry. Wouldn’t it make more sense for the rich man to give his extra food to the poor man? Then no one would need to smoke!”

בהפטורה: רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יִלְדָּה כְּצִחֵי רִנָּה וְגו' כִּי רַבִּים בְּנֵי שׁוֹמְמָה וְגו' (ישעיה נד, א)

Sing you barren woman who has not borne... for the children of the desolate are many... (Yeshaya 54:1)

Every Tefillah Makes an Impression:

Sefer Degel Machane Efraim quotes his grandfather, the Besht Hakadosh zy”a, as saying that every *tefillah* makes an impression in the Upper Worlds, and, at times, in this world as well. He discerns this concept from the verse (Tehillim 12:9): “When (what appears to be) lowest (*zulas*) to the sons of men is elevated...” This refers to prayer, which is a matter that stands at

the height of the world (Brachos 6B), but which people treat as lowly (*mezalzelim*) because they can’t imagine that their prayers can be accepted.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that people think their *tefillos* are “barren” and “desolate”, **but they do incredible things that one cannot even imagine.**

11 Elul 5551

Yahrzeit of Rav Pinchos ben Rav Avrohom Abba zy" a of Koritz

Saving an Avreich from the Depths of Purgatory:

Sefer Maasios Sichos (page 27) relates that there once was a refined young man who lacked a source of livelihood. He came up with the idea to travel to Egypt in order to learn sorcery, and he set off on his journey.

On his trip, he heard that there lived in the city of Koritz a Rebbe named Rav Pinchos. He went to see him, arriving in the middle of a Seudas Rosh Chodesh. When he got to the house, Rav Pinchos greeted him and told him to wash his hands and join the meal.

As he ate, the young man felt the need to relieve himself. He walked out of the room and

began to look for the facilities. He noticed some stairs leading downwards, and he walked down them. He kept descending the steps until he reached the depths of the underground. He kept walking until he came to a forest, where he was accosted by some thieves who stole everything he had. He managed to escape, and he found some soldiers. They asked to see his passport, but he didn't have one. They then forcefully inducted him into the army, where he remained for five years.

When he was released, he got back on the road and arrived at a city. When he asked what city it was, he was told that it was the town of Koritz. He remembered that a Rebbe lived there and he went to his home. When he came

to the Rebbe, he found Rav Pinchos still sitting at the same Rosh Chodesh meal, with the soup just being served.

“Where did you go?” Rav Pinchos asked. “Why were you gone for so long?”

Rav Pinchos then asked him, “Do you still want to go to Egypt to learn sorcery?”

He then realized that everything that had occurred had taken place over the course of a few minutes, not a few years.

The young man went back home and did *teshuva*. The Rebbe had also promised him that he would have a good *parnassah*, and he did.

May the memory of the tzadik be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.



בס"ד

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