

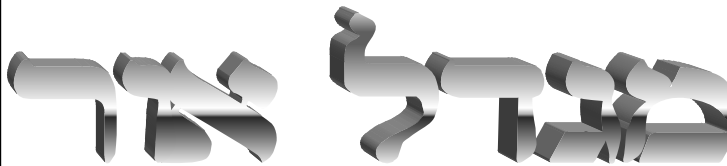
Start your Elul with some big angels in your court.

Print, e-mail, and share Migdal Ohr with others. You'll be glad you did.

E-mail 'Subscribe' to

info@JewishSpeechWriter.com

©2025 – J. Gewirtz



A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

This issue dedicated
I'llui nishmas

חנוך אברהם בן מרדכי ז"ל

Mr. Haney Dombroff z"l

Yahrtzeit 1 Elul

May the Torah learned be a merit for his
Neshama and his family.

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

7:38 -	הדלקת נרות
7:56 -	שקיעה
8:47 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:33 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:42 -	סוף זמן תפילה
7:54 -	שקיעה
8:40* -	צאת הכוכבים
9:07 -	צאת 72

* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

Now You Know!

The Torah, this week, adjures us, "Tamim tihiyeh im Hashem Elokecha, be wholesome with Hashem, your G-d."

We are warned not to seek out fortune-tellers or soothsayers, nor those who predict the future. Instead, we should rely solely on Hashem to take care of us. When we do so, we will be "whole" because He will watch over and take care of us. But it's not simply being whole in our trust and faith in G-d.

Why specifically are these the people we're enjoined not to seek out? Because they represent our desire to do things on our own, without help from Hashem.

While, if asked, most of us would say we are simply doing our hishtadlus, our normal efforts, this desire to know the future belies the truth – we feel everything is up to us.

When a child wishes to be independent, and insists on doing things himself, he often makes mistakes and sometimes gets battered and bruised. But that's part of growing up.

Once you're grown up, though, a Jew is supposed to realize that independence is a myth. Nothing happens without Hashem.

When we accept that, and know that when the future arrives we will deal with it with Hashem's help, we will avoid the bruises that come from trying to do things alone.

When we act like the child being carried and pampered by his parent, Hashem will carry us, and we will remain whole in mind, body and soul.

Thought of the week:

Everything is subjective.
Even objectivity.

"לא תטה משפט... ולא תקח שחד כי השחד יעור עיני חכמים ויסלף דברי צדיקים." (דברים טז:יט)

"Do not pervert judgment, do not play favorites, and don't take bribes, for a bribe blinds the eye of the wise, and distorts righteous words." (Devarim 16:19)

When it comes to judges and judgment, Judaism and the Torah consider them not to be wise men drawing their own conclusions, but representatives of Hashem, Himself, acting on His behalf. It is for this reason that, in some verses, judges are referred to as "elohim, powerful ones," using a mundane form of G-d's name. Understanding this, the Torah directs them to follow the laws Hashem has instituted for issuing rulings, and those rulings must always be based on the Torah, not on the personal feelings of the judges.

A judge might feel bad for one litigant and want to lean the proceedings in his favor to help him out. For example, if a poor man is claiming he is owed money by a rich man, their financial situations may not be taken into account; only the facts of the case are the basis for any judgments. Social justice and similar ideas have no place in Judaism, because Hashem's truth supersedes our vision and He is good to all. Therefore, the Torah warns us not to try to "help."

When judging, even during the deliberations, the two litigants are to be treated equally, so neither feels that the judge is favoring one side or the other. This, too, would be a perversion of justice. And then there is bribery.

A judge is not allowed to take a bribe or payment, even to rule honestly. They say that in Russia in the olden days, one had to bribe the judge just to get a fair trial, but this is not the way of the Torah or its judges. The question is, if he's being paid by one party to ensure a fair trial, why is it not allowed? They aren't asking him to favor anyone, just to be truly impartial.

The answer is that bribery blinds a judge to the true facts. Once he has received some gift, says the Gemara (Kesubos 105b) he becomes bound to the giver of the bribe, and they become of one mind. He will see things differently, and automatically be drawn to find in favor of that person. But there's more.

The posuk also says bribery distorts righteous words. A quick reading of the verse would lead one to believe we're again speaking about the words of a righteous judge. Before he is called wise, and now he is called righteous. This is wrong. We aren't speaking of the judge. We're speaking of the actual, factual words of the Torah, the halacha which is righteous and correct. Once a person has taken a bribe, his mind begins to distort these words and interpret them differently. Bribery renders even the most cogent and sound arguments useless.

Our desires and opinions for certain outcomes invalidate the very arguments we think we are using to find the truth. We must therefore all be very careful that before we come to conclusions, we are not allowing ourselves to be swayed by some ulterior thought. If we are, then truth will never come to light, for the darkness has already blinded our eyes.

A braisa is taught (Pesachim 22b, Kiddushin 57a and elsewhere) that Shimon Ha'Amsuni expounded on every time the word 'es' appeared in the Torah, that it came to include something else. When he reached 'es HaShem Elokecha Tira – "es" the L-rd Your G-d shall you fear,' he dropped this approach. He felt that one could not fear anything as he did the Al-mighty. (R' Akiva would later expound even this.)

His students asked, "Our Master! What will become of all the previous explanations you rendered?" He responded, "As I have received reward for expounding them, I will receive reward from separating myself from an untrue approach." But why did he say he already received his reward, when the main reward for Torah study is in the next world?

For one who seeks the truth, uncovering it is the greatest reward. When Shimon Ha'Amsuni felt he had found an error in his previous expositions, he was joyful and relieved to have reached the truth of the matter, even if it meant he was proven wrong.