In Sefer Ta'am V'da'as, Rabbi Moshe Shternbach notes that someone who lives in an environment of sinners and unscrupulous people invariably will be influenced by them. Even if a person manages to withstand the prevailing attitudes of the careless ones around him, and he avoids adopting sinful behavior, there is a level of insensitivity which may creep its way into his psyche, and he will not be able to maintain his level of intolerance for evil and corruption.

The verse tells us that when we come across a case of capital punishment for idolatry, we must “eradicate evil from our midst”. Yet, the Torah also tells us that this is to be accomplished by having the witnesses themselves stone the perpetrator. When someone witnesses the worship of idols, this shocking exposure has a deleterious effect upon him. It causes him to suffer, and the experience lowers the degree of repulsion he would feel about such an act. The severity of the sin is no longer unthinkable, because he just saw how it is possible for a person to become debased and act blasphemously. Therefore, to counterbalance this terrible experience of observing such a scene, the Torah commands that the witness himself carry out the sentence against the criminal. This allows the witness to act and “remove the evil from his midst”. The element of intolerance against such a crime, which was lost, will now be restored.

This is a powerful message to those who raise a family in an environment where many Jews violate the Shabbos. There is a distinct danger that the children, as well as the adults, will have their awareness of the special aura of Shabbos dulled. Shabbos is the pillar of our faith, and our observance of its laws and guidelines demonstrates our deep commitment and loving devotion to all that is holy. Yet, seeing week after week how many Jews disregard Shabbos takes its toll. In the mind of the observer, the sparkle and shine of Shabbos are tarnished, as he sees how sinners seemingly continue their lives with full confidence and integrity, without being harmed by their actions. In order to counterbalance this effect, we must publicly speak about the serious nature of chillul Shabbos. By studying this topic, we can fight off this insensitivity which is displayed in the midst of our communities.

THE PATH TO REHABILITATION

We all live a double life. There is our external world: our relationships with friends and family, our jobs, and our place in society. And we have our inner world: our private thoughts and feelings, our introspections and contemplations. We are influenced by both spheres, and we need them both.

And this is the matter of the killer who shall flee there and live: One who will strike his fellow without knowledge, and he did not hate him from yesterday or before yesterday.”

Devarim 19:4
waiving rabbinical prohibitions when one’s dignity is at stake. (Berachos 19b)

What about criminals? Do they also deserve respect and honor? The Talmud (Makkos 12b) raises an interesting question regarding people who have killed unintentionally. Accidental manslaughterers are penalized with exile to one of the designated cities of refuge. What if the people in the city of refuge wish to honor the killer in some way, perhaps with a public position? May he accept? Or would doing so negate the very purpose of exile? After all, one of the principal aspects of this punishment is loss of recognition and place in society. To what extent must the killer suffer public disgrace in order to atone for his criminal negligence?

Sefer Ein Ayah cites the Talmud (ibid.), which answers that the killer must state clearly, “I am a killer.” His inner truth must be public knowledge. He may not hide from the crime he committed, albeit unintentionally. He cannot pretend as if the killing never took place.

The Sages derived the need for the criminal to openly admit his crime from our verse, translating the word “בראשון לחם רעים” as “the word of”; “This is the word of the killer.” His response to the offers of society must be as one who has committed manslaughter.

The killer must not let social honors distract him from the private soul-searching which he must undertake. He needs to attend to his inner world of emotions and introspection, and avoid being caught up in the rush of public life. He should reject social honors by announcing: “I am a killer.”

If the people choose to accept him despite his past, then he is permitted to accept the honor. Respect from the community is a positive value that should not be denied, even to criminals. This respect should not be allowed to cover up the terrible truth of manslaughter. It should not negate or desensitize the killer’s inner sense of justice. But if he demonstrates responsibility for his actions, and his moral sensibilities are strong and healthy, then the external influence of social acceptance and honor will be a positive factor in his ultimate rehabilitation.

************************************************************************

UNDERSTANDING THE TERM “BROTHER”

“וַיָּשֶׁר בְּבֵיתוֹ לֹא מָאַכְלֶת יָשָׁהוּ לְשָׁהוּ”
לָא יֵעַרְבֶּהוּ נָא אִירֶם מַמְרָכֵת
“(And you shall do to him that which he conspired to do to his brother; and you shall destroy the evil from your midst)” Devarim 19:19

From here, they said that [if the person against whom the witnesses conspired is] killed [because of their testimony], they [the conspirators] are not killed. - Rashi

The Gemara (Makkos 8a) teaches us that the law of conspiring witnesses is only applied when the falsely-accused defendant is still alive. In other words, if the conspiring witnesses actually succeeded in having the accused put to death by the court before their scheme was exposed, then the court does not apply the intended punishment upon the false witnesses. This is derived from the wording of the verse, where the Torah tells us that we should “do to him (the conspiring witness) that which he plotted to do to his brother”. This can only be fulfilled, says the Gemara, when “their brother is alive”, and not after he is dead. According to this Gemara, calling someone “your brother” can only be when he is alive.

Rabbi Shmuel of Salant notes that many commentators have pointed out that we do, in fact, find many references where the Torah uses the term “brother” even when speaking about someone who is no longer alive. For example, in the law of yibbum (Devarim 25:6), the surviving brother should “rise up and carry on the name of his brother who has died”. Why, then, does the Gemara determine that the term “brother” in our case of the conspiring witnesses only refers to one who is alive?

There are two situations where we can use the term “brother”. One is in reference to a sibling, one who is born from the same parent(s). This situation of “brotherhood” is forever. Yet the term “brother” is also used in reference to fellow members of the Jewish nation. We are all brothers in the sense that we share in common the mission to support and fulfill the Torah and its mitzvos. We are all brothers in the sense that we share in common the mission to support and fulfill the Torah and its mitzvos.

Accordingly, when the Torah uses the term “brother” in our text, in reference to the topic of false testimony, it is not dealing with a brother born from the same mother or father, for, in fact, testifying concerning a close relative is prohibited.
We must say, therefore, that the “brother” here is a fellow Jew, with whom we all share the lifelong goal of fulfilling Torah and the service of Hashem. Therefore, the brotherhood here only applies when the defendant is alive. This is the lesson of the Gemara which teaches that the law only applies when the accused is still alive, and not when he has already been put to death due to their testimony.

******************************************************************************

A CRITICAL LACK OF APPRECIATION

Rashi cites the Gemara (Sota 42a) which states that the expression “שָׁמַעְתָּם אֶלָּא שָׁמַעְתָּם” teaches us that victory is assured to Bnei Yisrael even if their only merit is that of the recitation of שָׁמַעְתָּם. This is the opinion of Rabban Shimon bar Yochai. The Gemara (ibid. 44a) also quotes Rabbi Yosi HaGalili, who explains the directives issued by the Kohen who addressed the soldiers as they prepared to enter battle.

“Who is the man who is fearful and faint of heart, he shall go and return to his house.” Said Rabbi Yosi HaGalili: “The fearful one is the person who is frightened due to sins he has committed, even if he has spoken between the placing of his tefillin on his arm and on his head, or if he interrupted his davening by talking between פְּסֵקֵי דֹּזְיָמָה and the blessing of קְרָא אֵין יִרְאֶה הָאָדָם.” (ibid. 44b) How is it that these violations constitute a personal failing that is significant enough to warrant a person’s release from the ranks of the righteous soldiers? If the victory of the army was guaranteed due to the merit of the mitzvah of reciting the Shema, why was it necessary for a soldier to be fearful due to what seem to be minor infractions of speaking at improper moments? Even if these violations are considered significant indications of indiscretion, the merit of the Shema should still be intact.

In his sefer Ma’ayan Beis HaShoeiva, Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that upon closer analysis, we realize that the reading of the Shema indicates a firm and committed acknowledgement and acceptance of the yoke of Heaven and of performing the mitzvos. When one places his tefillin on his arm and upon his head, with the inscribed paragraphs of the Shema prominently featured within their compartments, the affirmation of this truth is complete. This is further demonstrated when a person dons his tefillin and reads the Shema properly. This is best accomplished as one introduces his prayers with the introductory Pesukei D’zimra, immediately followed by the blessings of Krias Shema, and, finally, the Shema itself. This is the design by which Shema is to be read, and the merit is indeed great when this is done. However, when one speaks between placing the tefillin on his arm and on his head, his carelessness indicates a fundamental oversight. When he converses casually after finishing Pesukei D’zimra, he obviously does not appreciate the momentum of intent and focus which is critical in order to arrive at a potent reading of the Shema. Consequently, one who negligently fails in these areas is necessarily lacking in a meaningful acceptance of the yoke of Heaven.

******************************************************************************

FOCUS UPON SHEMA

To hearken to the mitzvos is not only a means by which we can become informed of the message of the Torah, but it is in and of itself a mitzvah. Earlier (6:3), Moshe specifically clarified how listening and observing the mitzvos were two distinct commands, as he told the nation, “Hear, O Yisrael, and you shall be careful to do it.”

Rav Eliya Meir Bloch points out that here, in our parasha, as the Kohen addresses the soldiers as they are about to approach the battle, he tells them to focus their attention upon the mitzvah of “Shema”.

Rashi explains, “Even if there is no merit in you other than the recitation of Shema, you are worthy that he shall save you.” The point is that in many cases, the only thing a person may be lacking is a sincere willingness to listen. Once this attentiveness is acquired, then one’s quest for spiritual advancement can be achieved. When a soldier specifically, or even any person in the nation, responds to the call to “listen”, the message of the Torah can enter into his heart, and he can become one who is bonded with God. At that moment, the salvation of the Jewish people can come about through his efforts.

******************************************************************************
Ramban cites the בְּרֵאשִׁית who says that one who is afraid to go to war and does not go back home violates a negative commandment, for one must “not melt the heart of his brothers”.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz points out that this concept applies in all facets of life. One person’s fear or bad attitude can spread and weaken the morale of his peers. We must always remember

that our actions and attitudes not only affect us and our families, but our communities also.

The Gemara tells us just how aware we must be of the example of our deeds. Rabbi Yochanan said about himself that he was desecrated the name of God when he walked four cubits through the streets without wearing Tefillin or thinking about Torah. (See Yoma 86a) Rashi explains that Rabbi Yochanan would not be thinking about Torah because he was exhausted from toiling so hard in Torah study. Yet, the people did not know this and they would learn from him that it is not that important to be occupied with Torah study.

The leading Torah scholars of each generation have a direct responsibility to pray for the welfare of their generation. This is why, although this mishap occurred away from the immediate location of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, he was nevertheless held accountable for it. The Gemara also uses this idea to account for the fact that the people who must stay in the cities of refuge are only released from their being restricted to these cities upon the death of the Kohen Gadol. It is considered his responsibility that occurrences of manslaughter not occur, for he should pray on behalf of the generation that violent accidents not happen.

Sefer Techeiles Mordechai points out how using this same insight, Ramban (citing Ibn Ezra) explains that the elders of the city near the place where this unsolved murder occurred need to take responsibility for any acts of violence in their domain. If they had administered truth and justice, such a tragedy would not have taken place under their watch. Indeed, the elders need to procure atonement, for it was up to them to avoid the occurrence of this event. As the verse concludes: “We shall remove the innocent blood from our midst.” And how is this accomplished? It is a natural outcome when we (21:9) “shall do what is right in the eyes of God”.

Halachic Corner

Pirkei Avos Chapter 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zmanim for Parashas Shoftim 5780</th>
<th>Krias Shma</th>
<th>Tehilla</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
<th>Sunrise</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>9:39</td>
<td>10:37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>8:53</td>
<td>10:13</td>
<td>6:06</td>
<td>7:40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is a mitzvah to perform הכיר – consecration of the moon – every month. The earliest time to perform this mitzvah is after seven days from the moment the moon enters its new phase. Other opinions say that it may be said as
Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman, z"l. May his memory be for a blessing.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. How do we know that we should not settle for any judge, but we should search for the best judges available to establish courts? See Ohr HaChaim 16:20
2. How do we know that we must investigate certain types of sins that are committed? See Rabbeinu Bachya 17:2
3. Why does the Torah need to tell us that if a king follows the commandments given for him he will live a long life? See Chizkuni 18:2
4. Why were the Kohanim, specifically, given the כף (foreleg), the גפיים (jaws), and the זנב (maw) as gifts? See Ramban 18:3
5. Regarding קֵמְבָּר לָדֵד, a measurement is taken from the body to the nearest city. In the pasuk, which word indicates the place on the body from which the measurement to the nearest city is taken? See Ba’al HaTurim 21:2
6. How does one who goes out to war know that he has sinned and should not be at the battle? See Ohr HaChaim 20:8

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Shmuel Leib Schuman on the upcoming marriage of their daughter Zehava to Yechezkel Reischer; to Rabbi & Mrs. Binyamin Olstein on the recent Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Yitzchok Yehuda Jaeger; and to HTA Board of Governors member Jordan Klein and his wife Sue on the engagement of their son Dovie to Nechama Elka Silberstein; and to Pnina & Marc Levinson on the marriage of their son Dovie to Nechama Elka Silberstein; and to Allie Segal.

- By Hebrew Theological College joining together with the Chicago community and the Jewish world mourning the passing of Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, z”l. Rosh HaYeshiva of Telshe Yeshiva Chicago for over sixty years. His illustrious career as a Torah leader, spokesperson for the Torah world and builder of Chicago Jewry impacted countless talmidim, individuals, families, and communities world-wide.

- Blitstein Institute of Hebrew Theological College is looking forward to re-opening our campus for Fall Semester 2020. Our creative plan combines inspiring in-person classes from outstanding Limudei Kodesh and academic faculty with distance and online learning options. Fall Semester begins September 8th. Begin your future with a powerful education and a quick, efficient pathway towards a successful profession. Call Blitstein Institute for more information: 773-973-0241.

- Looking for a fun and fulfilling opportunity? Lev Respite is hiring! We are seeking enthusiastic, dedicated staff for our after-school program, serving children with special needs. Monday-Thursday, from 3:30-7:30. Will train. Background check required. Send résumé to rivka@libenu.org.

- Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro is not meeting in the restaurant, so we are bringing Torah to you. You can order a meal, and your order will arrive with Torah. Available Monday through Thursday, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM. For more information, call 312-626-6799. Zoom ID 999 2124 0863.

- Rabbi Chaim Sachnovitz was the Rov of Mishna Ugemora Shul in the 1960s. He printed 6 lomdishe sefarim. We are looking for photos and letters from Rabbi Sachnovitz and other Chicago Rabbinim. Please email ChicagoRabbisProject5781@gmail.com.

- Congregation KINS is proud to present a new program via Zoom conference which focuses on STEMM (Science, Technology, Medicine, and Mathematics) and its correlation with Torah. The first class will take place on August 25 at 12 noon. The speaker will be Rabbi Dr. Jerold Isenberg, Executive Director of RZC. His topic will be “Gematria: Does It All Add Up?” To access the KINS Zoom Room, just visit www.congkins.org.

- By Hebrew Theological College inviting prospective students to apply for our upcoming Fall 2020 semester. This year we will have three tracks for men: Yeshiva learning only, Yeshiva and College and Flex College. Chavrusa and shiurim will meet in person, and college classes will be held over Zoom and Canvas. To learn more, contact Rabbi Josh Zisook at jzisook@htc.edu or call 847-982-2500 ext. 1113.
Answers:
1. The repetitive language of "יָדֶּ֥ד יְשֵׁרָ֥ה" (righteousness, righteousness) indicates that we should try to establish the most qualified courts possible.
2. The words "יָדֶּ֥ד יְשֵׁרָ֥ה" (in your midst) and "יָדֶּ֥ד יְשֵׁרָ֥ה" (and you shall investigate) indicate that there are certain types of sins that are done privately (such as witchcraft). Those sins should be investigated and discovered.
3. Normandy, leadership causes one's life to be shortened (see Pesachim 87). The Torah is giving future kings advice on how to avoid this fate.
4. One explanation is that these body parts were a reward for Pinchas's act of bravery, which involved these three body parts (see Ramban for details). Another explanation of the Ramban is that these three body parts are considered to be the front of the animal's body, its mouth and its stomach (respectively). The Kohen, who is considered first, receives the "first" parts of every animal.
5. It is measured from the head of the corpse, as the word "גֵּרֵ֣ד" (that) is used, which can be transposed to spell "גֵּרֵ֣ד" (head).
6. When one goes to battle and is afraid, it is an indication that he has sinned, and that is why fear has overtaken him. He must return from the battlefield and examine his deeds.

*Yom Tov Digest*, a must have for Elul and Tishrei! A Feldheim publication by Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand. Panoramic in scope, this inspiring volume takes you on a thought-filled journey through Shabbos, Elul and Tishrei, and all the Yomim Tovim. Classical insights, anecdotes and stories – this sefer captures the unique character of all our sacred times. It will energize your Shabbos and Yom Tov and turn them into deeply personal moments. For your copy, contact rand@htc.edu.

**JDBY-YTT** is seeking an Executive Assistant to our incoming CEO. The ideal candidate will possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, organizational and computer skills and the ability to multitask. If you would like to join the staff of a fast-growing school and assist in the chumah habonim v’habanos of nearly 1,300 children, please submit a résumé by email only to hr@jdbyytt.org with “Executive Assistant to CEO” in the subject line. Please include several references.

Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov Elementary School is seeking candidates for the following positions in the General Studies Department for the 2020-2021 school year: permanent subs and primary grades teacher assistants. Scheduled hours will be Monday-Thursday afternoons 12:15-4:00 PM and Friday afternoons 11:45-1:00 PM. Call 773-583-5329 x402 or email résumés to rwechsler@jdbyytt.org.

Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi is seeking qualified candidates for the following General Studies positions: 1st and 3rd grade permanent substitutes; 4th grade teacher; assistants for PreK - 3rd grade. Applicants should contact Mrs. Jodi Sohl at jsohl@jdbyytt.org or 773-973-6150 ext 209.

Hebrew Theological College is proud to join Walder Science in welcoming the first cohort of students participating in the EDGE program, beginning fall 2020. This innovative program will train qualified individuals to become licensed math and science teachers in the local yeshivas and high schools. Kudos to Dr. Shira Roth, Chair of Blitstein Institute’s Education Department, for shepherding the secondary school licensure process through the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Kollel Ateres Ami invites you to our Hachnasas Sefer Torah! Sunday, August 30th, 2020, at 3:00 PM. There will be a tent set up in the parking lot on the corner of Toldy and Washtenaw. Join us in bringing life into community!

Join Kollel Ateres Ami’s Smicha Program, now learning Hilchos Shabbos. A structured program including source sheets, weekly quizzes, hands-on guidance and smicha upon completion. For more information: email kollelateresami@gmail.com or call 847-791-0643.

*By Ida Crown Jewish Academy* wishing mazal tov to the recipient of The Ruth Reingold z”l Award, Bayla Alter, who graduated from Ida Crown Jewish Academy, class of 2020. Bayla will be spending her gap year in Israel at Midreshet Torah V’Avodah and then will attend The University of Maryland Honors Program.

*The Ida Crown Jewish Academy* remembers Milton & Miriam Saltzman, מנהיג, on the occasion of their yahrtzeit. We thank Jack and Annette Saltzman and family for establishing a scholarship in memory of their parents and grandparents. May their memory be for a blessing.

*By Yisroel & Leora Spak* wishing mazal tov to our children, Chananya & Brina Dauber, on the birth of a son. Mazal tov to grandparents Dr. Moshe Tzvi & Mrs. Gerri Dauber. May we all have much nachas from our new grandson.

A hakammat matzeva (monument dedication) in memory of Hilda Rapoport, מנהיג, will take place at 10:30 AM, Sunday, August 23, at Waldheim Cemetery, Roosevelt Road and Des Plaines Road, Forest Park, IL. Gate 1, Lot 13, Section S, Row 13, Grave #5, or follow signs.

*By Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Castle* in memory of their mother, Ruhama Sacks, מנהיג, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on 3 Elul. (Anshe Motele)

*By Judy & Albert Milstein* and family, Daniel & Rosalie Novick and family, and David Novick in loving memory of our father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Rabbi William Z. Novick, מנהיג, on the occasion of his thirteenth yahrtzeit on 5 Elul. May his memory be for a blessing. (Kehilath Jacob Beth Samuel, Adas Yeshurun)

*In memory of our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and brother, רבי אליעזר בן-מצור ומאזן, מנהיג, on the occasion of his 11th yahrtzeit onابة בָּנָה.* May his neshama have an aliyah and may he be a שמח בַּעַל־זְכָרֶה for Klal Yisrael. They are involved in Misner families. (Chicago, Skokie, and Dallas, Monsey).

*By the Friedman and Greenspan families in commemoration of the 37th yahrtzeit of our beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother, מנהיג, on the 5th of Elul. She is still sorely missed by all who knew and loved her, as she was a true eishes chayil with her noble character and fine midos. May her holy neshama have an aliyah.

Likutei Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lilian Klein, מנהיג, May their memory be for a blessing.

To sponsor Likutei Peshatim for a future Shabbos, call Naomi Samber, 847-982-2500, Fax 847-982-2507, email samber@htc.edu.

Details listed in the Sponsorship Section are the responsibility of the sponsors and not of Hebrew Theological College.

Please do not read Likutei Peshatim during the Torah reading or during the repetition of the Shmoneh Esrei.

LIKUTEI PESHATIM HAS TORAH CONTENT – PLEASE TREAT IT RESPECTFULLY

A partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community.