



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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## ***Thoughts on Parashat RE'EH Year 23 by Dayan Abraham David***

The Seforno explains, Re'eh, see the stark choices before you there is no middle way, either blessings or curses, either extra ordinary success or tragic disaster. All this is dependent on our actions, beracha – blessings if we keep Torah and mitzvot and kallah – curses if we do not. Our history shows we do not have an ordinary pattern of life. Our role in the world is too important and fundamental for us to lapse into the ordinary. We are the heart of the world, as the Zohar quotes the answer of Rabbi Eliezer to the heathen philosopher's question. "How come we (the heathens) are happy without pain or trouble and you Jews, suffer more than all the other nations?" We are the heart the most important part of the body, the heart pumps blood to our brain and to the remotest parts of our body

to keep it alive. It is placed deep in the centre of the body and is protected by a ribcage to keep it safe as it is the most sensitive organ and it is only fed the purest food through blood. The heart cannot tolerate sores or scabs as other limbs can and even the slightest pain or problem with the heart will ring loud alarm bells. The heart needs to be strong to do its vital work. So it is with the Jewish people, their role is to influence the world and give it spiritual purpose and moral direction in the service of G-d. We are not free to indulge in the mundane activities of the nations however harmless they might seem. If we step out of line even slightly it is as if the heart has missed some beats, and if we become erratic in our behaviour not following the pattern set for our lives, it is as if the heart has faltered and is behaving erratically, then we need to be shocked back to our vital job of pumping spirituality to the world. The food we eat must be special as we see later

on in the parasha the restrictions on the animals we may or may not eat.

*When we work well, then G-d showers us with extra ordinary success to encourage us to understand our vital role. But when we slack, then immediately we are shown with pain and heartache that there is no room to error with the heart. Moshe uses the singular 'Re'eh' and then 'Lefnechem' in the plural: "See I put before you a choice of 'beracha Ve Kellah' in the singular as well so that every individual should feel responsibility for the multitude. The Talmud states that a person should look upon the world as in a balance for judgement 50 - 50 and so a person should see himself on balance for his deeds 50 – 50. If he does a mitzvah he tips the balance for himself and the world for good. If he transgresses he tips the balance the other way. Often people think of themselves as islands believing that whatever they do in their personal life has no bearing on others and should be no-one else's concern. Moshe Rabenu was telling them that it was not so. Whatever an individual does can be a blessing or a curse for the multitude.*

## **TORAH GEMS**

*'Banim atem LaHashem Elokechem Lo Tittgododu veLo tasemu koracha Ben-enechem LaMet'*, you are the children of G-d, you should not cut yourselves or make a bald spot between your eyes for the dead for you are a holy people to HaShem who has chosen you as a treasured people from all the nations. As it says: *'Ki Am kadosh ata LaHaShem'*. The *Alshick* and the *Or Hachayim* explain the connection between 'you are the children of G-d' and 'not wounding yourself or making a bald patch for the dead' as follows. They explain that the other nations would mourn their dead excessively, harming themselves with cuts and tearing out their hair in sorrow for their close ones who have left this world. The Torah teaches us that that even though we mourn our dead, we should not do so excessively. For we are the children of G-d and our dead are not lost, they do not fall out of the world but are like a son returning to his Father, the King, he is now back home at the palace. So the Jewish *Neshama* goes back to the treasure house of souls after sojourning in this world and that is why we may not mourn excessively.

Yes we mourn for the person we are going to miss and who might miss us but not a mourning of desperation. The fact that we are also *'Banim LaHaShem'*, children of HaShem, consoles us; that even though a Jew might have lost a father or mother or other close relative he depends on, he still has

a Father, HaShem, who will always be with him. So there is no need for excessive mourning.

There is an interesting story about Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu z"l. He was orphaned from his father at a very young age. In Porat Yosef Yeshiva, where he studied, a rich benefactor visited the Yeshiva. He gave some money to be distributed to the students who were all very poor as there was tremendous poverty in Jerusalem at the time; so the Rabbi, to be fair told the boys to stand in two groups – those who had parents and those who were orphaned, so that he could give one Peruta to those with parents and two to those who had lost a parent. He noticed little Mordecai standing in the group who had parents. He asked him why was he standing there since he had lost his father. The young Mordecai answered: "I still have a father in Heaven, Avinu she ba Shamayim, I am not an orphan.

We keep in touch with HaShem through our service as a Holy Nation '*Ki Am kadosh ata*', for we represent Him in this world hence we must be particular about keeping this Holiness. The Torah continues with the restrictions we have on the animals, fish and birds we are permitted to eat in order to keep up this Holiness. There might be physical benefits from eating Kosher, but the reason we are not permitted to eat the unclean animals is spiritual. Our spirituality is affected by what we eat. Non-kosher animals have a detrimental effect on our thinking and on our beliefs. Some Jewish philosophers

came to the Rambam with many heretical questions on belief and the Torah. The Rambam promised to answer all of them but made one request. He asked them to eat only kosher for the next 2 weeks and then to come back to him. They agreed. When they came back to him after the 2 weeks they did not have those questions any more, they had found the answers for themselves.

The Zohar quotes the answer of Rebbe Eliezer to the heathen philosopher's question: "You say G-d loves you and you are like His children, yet He deprives you of all the food we enjoy and you are not permitted. Rebbe Eliezer answered, "Like the heart in the body, we are the heart of the world. The heart receives its nourishment only from the purest source, the blood. The food is prepared and when eaten, the crude impurities are excreted and only the best is digested and the purest part is imbibed by the blood which feeds and nourishes the heart. Similarly, we Jews have to eat only the purest and best for our spiritual intake. Our physical intake can determine our spirituality.

### **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

During WW1 when Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian was a young man, the Germans yms"n were stationed in the town of Kelm where he lived. The Germans yms"n brought Jews to build a railway line. These workers were kept behind a barbed wire. As Rabbi Lopian passed by with his friends they heard shouts "Brother Jews have mercy upon us. We are not being given food and will die of starvation".

They went to complain to the foreman but he said that one thousand workers were brought but only five hundred portions of food were sent. The young boys immediately went collecting food, going from house to house filling their sacks with any food they could get. They entered one house where there was a woman with five children. She showed them one piece of bread and said this is all she had. But she broke the piece into two and threw half into the sack, displaying exceptional generosity and tenderness.

Even if one's situation is serious and your means are meagre and you spare something for your brother this proves generosity and gives honour to HaShem as the passuk says "Honour HaShem with your substance".

## **Shabbat Shalom**

### **HALACHOT**

1. We have the minhag to make Hatarat Nedarim on erev Rosh Hodesh Ellul which is 40 days before Yom Kippur, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018.
2. One should try to understand the words of Hatarat Nedarim which is the undoing of Nedarim. For the undoing of a known neder one needs to explain it to one of those who are sitting to be mater the nedarim before they begin.
3. Our minhag is to say Selichot for the whole month of Ellul and the ten days leading to Yom Kippur. We begin on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> August this year. The minhag Ashkenaz is to blow the Shofar after Shacharit for the month of Ellul. Our minhag is to blow the Shofar in the Kaddish Titkabal at the end of Selichot, some blow the Shofar every time we say the vaYa'abor and the 13 Attributes of Rahamim in the Selichot.

Other Sephardim do not blow the Shofar at all during Ellul.

4. We say Birchot Hashahar after dawn before saying Selichot.
5. We do not say Selichot before midnight.

During Ellul we begin looking through our deeds in preparation for Rosh Hashana - Yom HaDin

**We have a regular Youth  
Minyan organised by Jason  
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses  
followed by a kiddush**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush  
Please contact  
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749  
For Seuda Shlishit  
or to rent the  
Nancy Reuben Hall  
for a Simcha  
Please contact  
Yanky David 07725 408724*

### **SHABBAT TIMES**

Shabbat commences	8:17 pm
Shabbat terminates	9:30 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat Shacharit	8:30 pm
Shiur Pirke Avot	6:50 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	7:50 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit for the summer	7:30 pm