



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI  
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ  
TEL: 020 8203 5701

## **Thoughts on**

## **RE'EH**

**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 mitzvoth 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 Kallah' 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.*

## **GEMS**

The Parasha tells us about the 'Er Hanidachat' the mitzvah to utterly destroy a city whose inhabitants have done idolatry in spite of being warned time and again. These inhabitants with their families were to be put to death by the sword. The Pasuk tells us 've natan lecha Rachamim Ve rechamcha' And G-d will give you mercy and be merciful to you. The Or Hachayim explains that G-d promises us that even though I have given you a command which is a cruel action, to kill of your brethren man, woman and child inhabitants of such a city, I promise you mercy. It is well known that a person who does cruel deeds is influenced by them and becomes a cruel person. He gives the example of those Yishmaelim who tortured and beheaded people at the command of the king. How they

admitted to becoming blood thirsty and enjoying being cruel; destroying in themselves all feelings of mercy. Here Hashem promises us that since we are doing a mitzvah at His command we will not be affected by the cruelty of our actions but we will remain merciful. The Rabbi of Brisk goes even further arguing that the doing a mitzvah will never have a bad affect on us – as it says 'shomer mitzvah lo yedah Davar Ra'. A person who does a mitzvah will not receive bad from it. Hence there is no fear of receiving a bad influence of cruelty from doing this mitzvah; What the Pasuk is promising is that even if you have a cruel streak in you, by doing this mitzvah I will cure you and make you merciful. But what is the pasuk adding 'Ve Rechamcha' and I will be merciful to you, it would seem there is a prerequisite for G-d being merciful to us that is that we have to be merciful ourselves. When we become merciful and care for each other then Hashem treats us with mercy. That is why it says 'Ve Natan lecha rachamim' I will make you merciful and then Ve Rechamcha' I will be merciful to you. It is through the keeping of mitzvot that we are able to do what is right and correct in the eyes of Hashem 'Lishmor et Kol mitzvotav La-asot Hayashar Be'enei Hashem'.

'Banim atem La Hashem Lo Titgododu Ve lo Tasemu Koracha La Met' You are the children of G-d you should not cut yourselves or not make a bald spot between your eyes for a dead person. 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 La Hashem*'---

The Alshech explains why a Jew is not allowed to cut himself or tear out his hair to mourn his dead because you are my children and when a Jew dies he is really going back home to his father his neshamah is part of Hashem, hence do not overdo your mourning to harm yourselves for the dead. When we mourn and cry for someone who has passed away our grief is for what we are going to miss here but for the Neshamah it is a home coming, unlike the concept of the nations who do such things for their dead who feel they are lost. But immediately after this the Torah warns us '*Lo Tochal Kol Toebah*' do not eat abominable creatures and goes on with the laws of animals permitted to us and those which are forbidden

For to keep our Neshamot pure and in condition to return to its source, Hashem, we must be careful what we eat so as not to defile the holiness in us.

### **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

***Therefore I am instructing you saying: 'open your hand to your needy and poor brethren in your land (15:11).***

The word '*leimor*' means to 'to say' and is generally used when the speaker wishes his words to be repeated to others, as when G-d spoke to Moses expecting him, in turn, to convey the message to the Bnei Yisrael. The literal translation

of the above verse is: 'Therefore I instruct you to say you shall open you hand to your needy and poor brethren'. What is the meaning of: 'to say'?

The Rabbi of Vorki explained that although one certainly does a great mitzvah when one gives to the needy, it is important to appreciate the distress that the recipient experiences when he must appeal to others for help. Asking for alms can be a most humiliating and crushing experience, and it is therefore important to try and lift the spirits of the needy as well as provide for his material needs. This can be done by telling him that wealth is often cyclical, and that people who have been in dire straits at one time have been blessed with success, so that he, too, may look forward to a turn of fortune. One should encourage the needy person, telling him that although he is now a recipient, he will eventually be in a position where he will be able to provide help for others.

This says the Rabbi of Vorki, is what the Torah tells us. 'When you give alms to the poor you are instructed to say to him: "You will yet one day open your hand to the poor. Your fortune will change and you will be able to help others"'. Nothing is as devastating as the loss of hope. Giving someone hope is every bit as important as providing other modes of help.

Nothing is as devastating as the loss of hope. Giving someone hope is every bit as important as providing other modes of help.

***Shabbat Shalom***

## **HALACHOT**

1. We have the minhag to make Hatarat Nedarim on erev Rosh Hodesh Ellul which is 40 days before Yom Kippur, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August.
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 should explain it to one if those who are sitting on the Hatarah before this.
3. Our minhag is to say Selichot for the whole month of Ellul and the ten days leading to Yom Kippur. We begin on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</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. During Ellul we begin looking through our deeds in preparation for Rosh Hashana - Yom HaDin.

This Parasha Sheet is dedicated to the memory of **Levy Ben Moshe Kelaty** whose Yarsiet is on the 27<sup>th</sup> Av (17<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

### ***SHABBAT TIMES***

Shabbat commences	8:09 pm
<b><u>We should not light candles before 6:53 pm</u></b>	
Shabbat terminates	9:20 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Shabbat :Latest Shema	
Magen Avraham	8:49 am
Shabbat Latest Shema Gra	9:25 am
Shiur by Dayan David	6:30 pm
Mincha Shabbat	7:30 pm
Arvit	9:30 pm

### ***WEEKDAY TIMES***

Shacharit	7:00 am
Sundays	8.00 am
Mincha	7:30 pm
followed by Arbit	

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS CONCERNING COVID-19**

**PANDEMIC**  
**VUSHMARTEM MEOD**  
**LE'NAFSHOTEHEM**

**VEHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA**