



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Daniel and Liesbeth Harris on the occasion of Avi's wedding this week to Hadassah Cohen in London. The Aufruf takes place this Shabbos in Shul followed by Kiddush after Davening in the Shul Hall.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Helen Braunold who has Yahrtzeit for her father this Shabbos, 9th Elul and for her mother on Sunday, 10th Elul

Amalek and the Worst of the Three Cardinal Sins Rabbi Yissochar Frand (Torah.org)

The pasuk at the end of Parshas Ki Seitzei says, "Remember that which Amalek did to you on the path when you came out of Egypt." (Devorim 25:17) This is the parsha we read on the Shabbos before Purim. The truth is that a person can fulfill his obligation to 'remember the obliteration of Amalek' by hearing this reading this week on Parshas Ki Seitzei as well, provided the Baal Koreh has in mind to be 'motzi' him and he has in mind to be 'yotzei' with the reading of the Baal Koreh.

Rashi here comments on the juxtaposition of the parsha of "Zachor es asher asa lecha Amalek" with the previous parsha which warns against possessing improperly calibrated scales (allowing the owner of those scales to cheat his customers in business). A person is required to utilize strictly calibrated weights and measures in his commerce transactions. Rashi explains in the name of the Medrash Tanchuma: If a person possesses deceitful weights and measures, he must worry about the enemy. Cheating in business will lead to attacks from Amalek and his ilk. This seems like a rather novel idea. There are so many significant prohibitions in the Torah. Someone fixing his scales so that he can cheat his customer out of a couple of ounces of merchandise does not seem to be the worst thing in the world. True, it is dishonest, and it is a form of theft, which is very bad, but why is this the aveira (sin) that invites attack from Amalek? If the issue here is g'neivah (theft), let the Torah state here "Lo signov" (you shall not steal), which indicates a much more blatant aveira than tweaking scales. Why will the specific aveira of owning imprecise weights and measures cause the Ribono shel Olam to send Amalek against us?

There is a very important Netziv at the end of the parsha on this pasuk of "Zachor es asher asa lecha Amalek..." The Netziv asks this very question. The Netziv further points out that there were no weights and measures in the midbar because there was no commerce taking place there. But more generally, the Netziv asks, why specifically this prohibition? The Netziv magnifies the question by citing a Gemara (Bava Basra 88b) that the aveira of possessing improper weights is greater than the aveira of gilui arayos (sexual immorality)! This is a scary statement! Gilui arayos is one of the gimel chamuros – the three categories of aveira for which a person needs to suffer martyrdom rather than transgress them.

Why is that true? The Netziv quotes the Gemara in Baba Basra about these "Three Cardinal Sins" – Giluy arayos, Shefichas damim (murder), and Avodah Zarah (idolatry). Why are these three aveiros the most serious? It certainly is not merely because each carries the death penalty, for there are also other aveiros that carry the death penalty. The Netziv explains that there are only three reasons why a person sins.

All aveiros are a result of one of three spiritual shortcomings:

(1) Lack of Emunah (belief in G-d). I commit an aveira because I believe

Important Appeal From The Rov

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With the approach of the ימים נוראים I request from each and every member who is able to support my annual collection for funds to help those of our Kehilla who require a "top up" for ט" expenses.

All donations are gratefully accepted with a ברכה for a שנה טובה and ומתוקה.

Donations can be made in either of the following

1. Directly to myself (in Shul or at home) either cash, cheque or voucher payable to ZY Gemach (charity no. 1153306)

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Thank you in advance for your generous response to this Mitzva.

that G-d does not know or care about what I am doing.

(2) Tayvah (lust). In other words, my Yetzer HaRah overcame me. It was too tempting – whatever it may be – forbidden sexual relations; forbidden food consumption, whatever it is.

(3) Midos ra'os (bad character traits) – Anger, haughtiness, jealousy, etc. The Netziv says that these three categories are considered the most severe because they represent the essence of these three shortcomings. Avodah Zarah is pure, unadulterated, lack of emunah, in that idolatry epitomizes the aveira of lacking belief in G-d. Gilui arayos is the quintessential aveira of tayvah, in that sexual immorality epitomizes this second branch – the classic aveira of lust. Finally, Shefichas damim: Murder results from extremely bad character traits. They are either so angry with a person or they have lost control of themselves. Either way, it is midos ra'os. That is why these three categories of aveira are the Cardinal Sins.

Sometimes a person can have a combination of more than one of these spiritual shortcomings. If someone keeps his store open on Shabbos, what is that all about? For one thing, it indicates a lack of emunah. But it also involves a tayvah for money.

The Netziv asks, which is the worst of these three Cardinal Sins (and corresponding root spiritual shortcomings)? The Netziv suggests that Avodah Zarah is worst. With sexual immorality, we can understand how the person succumbed to his passions. His Yetzer HaRah got the better of him. Anger, Jealousy, and all the bad character traits are a terrible thing. To lose control and want to kill someone is terrible. But we know what it's like when we get angry and lose control. We can relate to it even if we cannot justify or condone it. But the worst of the worst

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.10pm
Candle Lighting	7.20pm - 7.35pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ט	9.38am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 8.02pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.07pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon Bank Holiday	7.10am / 8.10am / 9.30am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

isAvodah Zarah— lack of emunah. There is no lust for idolatry. So what is it? It is simply that the person does not believe in the Ribono shel Olam. That is the worst aveira.

The Netziv concludes: Now we understand the gravity of "If one is deceitful in weights and measures..." The essence of this aveira is not lust for money. Making an extra five cents or ten cents on the sale of another quarter pound of corned beef is not a tayvah issue. Maybe stealing a car or some precious jewelry is rooted in tayvah. The person's Yetzer HaRah overcame him. But cheating in weights? I don't think anyone ever became wealthy because he tampered with his weights. Of course, pennies add up to large sums, but people with a lust for money are not satisfied by acquiring ill-gotten gains in such small increments.

The essence of the aveira of someone who cheats on weights and measures is that he doesn't believe the Ribono shel Olam provides for the livelihood of individuals. Therefore, he needs to cut corners. He needs to squeeze every little extra bit out of his commercial transactions because he is not sure he is going to make enough money otherwise. This demonstrates lack of emunah.

That is why the preamble to Zachor es asher lecha Amalek is not just "Lo signov" (Do not steal). Lo signov is about lust for money. That is a bad enough aveira. However, possessing dishonest weights and measures is an aveira rooted in a far greater spiritual shortcoming: Lack of emunah. What is Amalek all about? The pasuk says: "V'lo Yareh Elokim" (Devorim 25:18) – They did not fear G-d. Amalek is that power in the world that denies the existence of the Ribono shel Olam. That is why they "jumped into the scalding hot bath before any other nation." They could not tolerate a nation who represented Hashemin this world. Amalek is all about lack of emunah. If a person is dishonest regarding weights and measures, he does not believe that the Ribono shel Olam provides parnassah (livelihood). That lack of emunah creates a susceptibility to the punishment of Amalek, who represent lack of emunah.

Foolish Philosophers

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

When you build a new house, you shall make a guard rail for your roof, so that you shall not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house, when the faller will fall from it. (Devarim 22:8)

when the faller will fall: That one [who would fall] deserves to fall; nevertheless, you should not be the one to bring about his death, for meritorious things are executed through meritorious people, while things of ill-fortune are executed through guilty people. – Rashi

Can we have a more practical Mitzvah than this!? The Torah requires us to build a protective fence to keep people from falling from a dangerous height. Included in this is creating a safe living space. As a self-deputized "Captain Safety" I have found myself quoting Clifford very often and declaring emphatically, "Safety First!" The Talmud echoes the exact same sentiment in very strong language, "Sakansa Chamura M'Issurah" – "Danger is more serious than that which is forbidden". Wonderful and holy people are very careful with many forbidden activities like watching out for what kosher brands of foods they eat and what they handle on Shabbos, but the caution against dangerous behavior that puts life and limb at stake is even a more serious matter.

The importance of this practical obligation cannot be emphasized or proclaimed enough. Yet there is a very deep philosophical point hiding here in plain sight. Rashi is alert to it! The one who would fall in a house without this protective fence is called by the Torah as "the faller". It seems to imply that that was his destiny or somehow, he was deserving of it. Then why should one be required to build a guard rail? Who can prevent a predetermined tragedy from occurring? How or why could anyone ever be held responsible? Rashi is alert to this point too.

When Kayin killed his brother Hevel it was a tragedy of tragedies. It was a holocaust like no other. All of his future generations, perhaps billions of people, were deleted, snuffed out in that terrible deed. When Kayin was approached by HASHEM about the whereabouts of Hevel, to give him a chance to own up and admit, he made an infamous declaration, a feeble excuse that no one has dared to copy since, "Am I my brother's keeper!?"

What could he possibly be thinking!? Of course, he is his brother's keeper! We know that! He was worthy of having direct contact with HASHEM. He could not be completely foolish.

The Midrash says that what Kayin was saying is, "Am I the keeper of souls, the ultimate guardian of who lives and who dies?! Could I have killed him if you did not want him to die?! Therefore, G-d did it and I was only fulfilling His will. Otherwise, he would never have died and I could never have killed him had that not been the will of G-d." He became a

big philosopher and an advocate for G-d's will!

He answered a practical question with a philosophical answer. What does it mean to answer a practical question with a philosophical answer? A man enters his home and opens his bedroom closet only to find a total stranger standing there. The man shouts at the intruder, "What are you doing here!" The stranger answers calmly, "Everybody's gotta be someplace!" Yes, philosophically he is right but what is he doing there in someone else's bedroom? Kayin was right but that was not his business. He did not have to kill him! That stain remains on his bloody hands forever!

Rabbi Meir from Premishlan pointed out that every human trait, seemingly good or bad, has a positive reason for being. He said that even the quality of Apikorsis, the ability to reject or rebel against HASHEM has a powerful purpose. When is that?

When it comes to helping others, we have to act as if nobody else can or will do this if I don't. We are not to declare in times of emergency when there is action to be taken, "HASHEM will help!" We need to jump into immediate action and leave the philosophizing for another time. Afterwards we can look back, in retrospect, and say "it was Beshert".

Whatever may have already happened is for the good. That is for retrospect. Until something actually happens, we are all required to play "Captain Safety". Ultimately, we must make certain that we are on the right side of history, that we were part of the solution and not part of the problem, that we were saviors and not destroyers, practical people and not foolish philosophers.

A Measured Approach to Change Mordechai Dixler (Torah.org)

Moshe continues to enumerate in Ki Seitzei, this week's Torah portion, the many Mitzvos G-d gave to the Jewish people. This portion actually has the largest listing of Mitzvos of any weekly Torah reading – 74 in total. Among these is the prohibition of doing business with, and even owning, faulty weights and scales. The prohibition to steal another's property is well known, of course, and using inaccurate weights would seem to be just another form of stealing. However, when the Torah describes the specific prohibition of faulty weights, it goes out of its way to explicitly condemn the practice saying, "All who do these things are an abomination to G-d – all who do falsehood. (Deut. 25:16)" General theft, as severe as it is, does not carry this harsh condemnation. What is it about faulty weights that warrants this language?

To understand this, we should ask ourselves: how much money is stolen when a person uses a false weight? In order to fool customers he or she would only adjust the scales slightly, so as not to raise suspicion. One would probably offset the weight by no more than 10%. So if the person were selling apples for \$1 per pound, but set the scale so that a "pound" was really only 9/10 of a pound, all they've pilfered is 10 cents per pound. Is 10 cents such a severe crime?

No, ten cents is not a huge act of theft—but that is only one purchase, of one pound of apples. After ten purchases, it's a dollar. After a day, it's well over \$10. After a year, it's thousands of dollars.

The crime of false weights and measures is so abominable because it is not simply the result of a one-time temptation. It takes obvious premeditation to alter the scales, and to decide, each and every day, to open up your shop with false weights, every sale a small act of theft. It is this unrepentant, ongoing engagement in crime that warrants the Torah's severe condemnation.

We know that the reward for good deeds is greater than the punishment of bad ones. So if such is the condemnation of a persistent evil practice, one can imagine the effusive praise for one continually engaged in Mitzvos! It's for this reason that when we seek to make positive changes in our life, it's so important to undertake a small, repeating commitment. This is known in Jewish tradition as a "Kabola," a pledge. To make real change in your life, commit to a positive practice, like giving money to charity, or offering a compliment to someone, and pledge to do it every day. I know a young man who gives 5 cents to charity every day. That's not very much, but it requires forethought, and persistence, and it trains him every day to think about other people. It's a small investment, that adds up to not only \$1000 over 50 years, but it ultimately changes his personality, and he is more likely to give of himself when called upon for greater sacrifice.

As Rosh Hashana approaches, we look to make lasting changes in our lives. Let's avoid the end of the year rush and make a small daily pledge. It amounts to a daily decision to do a special Mitzvah, and the benefits that accrue will bring overwhelming rewards. (Based on Be'ar HaParsha, Rav Elimelech Biderman)