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בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
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A BOUNDARY OF LOVE

Commenting on the words, "Because your love is more precious than wine," the *Medrash*¹ states, "The words of the *Rabbonim* are more beloved than the words of the Torah." What a difficult statement to understand! How is it possible that the words of those who toil to understand and interpret the Torah are more beloved than the Torah itself?

Rabbeinu Yonah, in his *Shaarei Teshuva*,² addresses this question, but first some background is in order. At the end of *Parshas Acharei Mos*, we find the *passuk*, "Safeguard my safeguards..."³ The *Gemara*⁴ explains this means, "Make safeguards to keep my safeguards." In other words, enact ordinances that would keep people from violating any *issur d'oraisa*.

Why? Why is it important to create laws upon laws, why not simply avoid violating the Torah; no need for any extra statutes. The answer, says Rabbeinu Yonah, is based on one's understanding and relationship with Hashem's Torah. If we recognize the importance of keeping the Torah, and the severity of violating the Torah, we would naturally avoid doing things that might even accidentally lead to some sort of infringement on the word of Hashem.

This idea, the idea of *yiras shomayim*, is a basic building block of serving Hashem. Without it, one may know all of the laws, but violate every single one.

To quote R' S. R. Hirsch,⁵ "Our Sages had profound insight into human nature and into the practical aspects of Torah observance. Accordingly, they enacted precautionary measures to safeguard Torah observance. Actually, however, any discerning *yarei shomayim* concerned about Torah observance would have had to adopt such precautions on his own, to govern his personal life."

A life of Torah is a wonderful and precious thing; it is up to us to do whatever we can to adhere to its laws, and keep far away from any sort of infraction.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Yiras shomayim is a fundamental aspect of *avodas Hashem*, but doesn't seem very easy to cultivate. Are there any tricks to make *yiras shomayim* a part of us?

While there are never any shortcuts, sometimes it may be wise to use a roundabout approach. Although focusing and remembering the fact that Hashem watches and knows everything about us is a direct method,¹ if we are not ready for such thoughts, it can cause us to be so fearful that we drive this idea out of our mind.

A softer approach would be to focus on the positive² — that every *mitzvah* done, and every *aveirah* avoided, is recorded and will give me untold reward. When I hold my tongue, and only Hashem knows what I wanted to say; when I shared something with a friend that I really wanted to keep to myself, and so on, all of these actions are recorded, and will be repaid.

By focusing on the positive, we will make it easier to realize, everything we do is counted, and everything we do counts.

1 *Mesillas Yescharim*, Chap. 25

2 *Rabbeinu Yonah* on *Avos* 2:1 s.v. והסתכל

1 *Shir Hashirim* 2:1

2 3:7

3 *Vayikra* 18:30

4 *Yevamos* 21a

5 *Vayikra* 18:30 s.v. ושמרתם

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Those with limited time for Torah study must include the areas of Torah that are highest priority for their daily attention. Among others, these areas include *Sifrei Mussar*, for they power one's ability to overcome the influence of the *yetzer hora*. - R' Shlomo Gantzfried zt"l, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 27:3

A REAL NAILBITER

Reuven* sat down across from Tzvi, as he always did at the beginning of *seder*. Shabbos afternoon *seder* was rough for anyone, but especially difficult for a young *yeshiva bachur* who craved more sleep. Nevertheless, there they were, ready to learn.

As Reuven reached for his *Gemara*, Tzvi let out an audible gasp. “What happened? Are you ok?” A confused Reuven could only respond, “What?”

“Your fingers. Are you ok? Did you stick them in the oven or something? Why do you have band-aids all over your fingers?”

“Oh, that!” Reuven said with a smile. “Don’t worry, I’m totally fine. You see, I have a terrible habit, I don’t even think about it, but sometimes I bite my nails. And I realized that this happens on Shabbos — I’d look down and realize what I was doing. Whoops! So I devised a simple solution. I put band-aids on the ends of all of my fingers.”

Tzvi stared for a moment, then remarked, “But don’t you feel silly? Like, wherever you go, everyone sees you with a million band-aids all over.”

Reuven raised an eyebrow. “Silly? I didn’t think of that until now, but no, I don’t. Not at all. In fact, quite the opposite, this is more like a badge of honor.”

“How so?”

Reuven shrugged. “Not that it’s the biggest deal in the world, but this is a small example of exactly what we all *should* be doing. Finding ways, sometimes out of the box, to do the right thing. I’m actually quite proud of these band-aids. Not only do they specifically help me not bite my nails, they are also a constant reminder of my mission. I’m here to serve Hashem, and this world is here to help me do so.”

“Whoah — pretty deep stuff for some band-aids!” Tzvi said with a laugh.

Reuven smiled. He had a penchant for making speeches where there were none to be made.

“Very well. Let’s learn.”

And they did.

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- It is better to not be learned, but have *yiras shamayim*, than to know all of the Torah, but have no fear of Heaven!¹
- One way to acquire fear of Heaven is by observing the *mitzvos* very carefully. One’s thoughts will then follow one’s actions.²
- There are actually three types of fear of Heaven — fear of punishment, awe of Hashem, and above all, fear of sin.³

1 *Chayei Adam* 143:1

2 *Birchas Peretz* on *Acharei Mos*

3 *Mesillas Yesharim*, Chap. 24