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בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
EMOR

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

IT'S ABOUT TIME

In the middle of *Parshas Emor*, Hashem tells *Moshe Rabbeinu* about Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the month of *Tishrei*. Then Hashem speaks of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement that occurs on the tenth of *Tishrei*. In describing the date, the *passuk* says, "On the tenth day of this seventh month."¹

The word 'this' seems to be out of place, almost as if the *passuk* is excluding a different seventh month. Why would the *passuk* need to use this word, wouldn't it be sufficient to simply write, 'the seventh month?'

Reb Aharon Kotler² (1891–1962) explains that the term 'this' is used to underline the importance of the month. This month — the same month that has Rosh Hashanah in it. And why reference Rosh Hashanah? Reb Aharon explains that there is an all-too-common phenomenon that we all find ourselves in; we procrastinate, we stall, and we delay. We think we have all the time in the world, and anyway, we don't need so much time to accomplish the thing that we are going to do.

To combat this, Hashem writes 'this' month — this is the month in which you need to prepare yourself for Yom Kippur. I have given you an unparalleled day of forgiveness, but you must prepare yourself for this day. Use Rosh Hashanah for your preparations; don't wait until the last minute!

The fact that we procrastinate is not limited to Yom Kippur — unfortunately it's often a regular occurrence in many of our lives. Because of this, opportunities are squandered and we fail to achieve what are capable of accomplishing.

We might push off doing homework, reaching out to a friend who needs to hear a kind voice, or doing chores around the house. When we finally get to those tasks, we do them in a hurried fashion, if we do them at all!

Nevertheless, if we put our mind to it, we can train ourselves to use our time wisely, and over time, we will be amazed at what we've been able to accomplish.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

There are many reasons one would procrastinate, ranging from fear (I'm worried I might not do a good job!) to laziness (I'm just too tired!) to boredom (It's no fun, I'll do it later).

Because there are multiple reasons to push off an unwanted task, one must have different tools to use depending on the situation. However, there are some ideas that can work in many situations we encounter.

One idea is to raise the value in our minds of the task we are about to do. Because we don't give the task much value, we are more prone to push it off in favor of other business. When we tell ourselves how important the task at hand is, or envision how good we will feel when we've finished it, we raise its value in our mind, and can more readily accept doing it.

Another idea is to only do a task for ten minutes. After ten minutes, we are free to go. When a person feels that they aren't 'trapped,' it's easier to do the work. And the truth is, once a person gets started on a project, they are more likely to continue beyond ten minutes. This way, we start to habituate ourselves to do things right away, and not leave them for later.

1 *Vayikra* 23:23-27

2 *Mishnas Reb Aharon Al Hatorah*, p. 204

Mazel Tov!

The Ohr Yisrael family would like to wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Naamat on the birth of a baby boy.

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Having been blessed to serve in several Mekomos HaTorah, I have observed that Mussar study is the factor which fuels the greatest yeshivos to reach the purest and most exalted levels of Torah study.

- R' Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l, Revered Mashgiach of Yeshivos Mir and Ponevezh, *Ohr Yechezkel* vol.1 pg. 336

WORKING TOWARDS ETERNITY

Many of us are familiar with the story, “The Tortoise and the Hare.” In this fable, an anthropomorphic hare challenges a slow-moving tortoise to a foot race. Confident in his certain win, the hare takes a recess during the competition, only to find the tortoise has won in his absence. A fanciful tale, with an obvious lesson — slow and steady wins the race. However, this may work in parables, but what about real life?

As it turns out, research led by Dr. Adrian Bejan,¹ Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Duke University, shows that indeed, in the race of life, animals that take a slow and steady approach actually have a faster average speed over the course of their lifetime in comparison to their speedier animal friends. This is because speedier animals tend to take day-long breaks, snoozing or eating. The cheetah, for example, known for its exemplary speed, spends about twelve hours a day sleeping!

Lest one think this is limited to the animal kingdom, one need not look further than the famous Rebbi Akiva. Rebbi Akiva did not learn Torah for the first forty years of his life. After seeing a rock worn away by constantly dripping water, he concluded that if water can wear away a rock, then Torah can affect his heart.²

Though the general conclusion one takes from the story is the power of Torah, we would be remiss if we ignored the critical element of constancy. The water only wore away the rock because of the constant dripping, and the Torah affected Rebbi Akiva because of his constant learning. Had he dawdled, decided to study ‘the next day,’ or wasted the days away, no one would know the name Akiva today.

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1 A. Bejan, Ü. Güneş, J. D. Charles & B. Sahin. Scientific Reports, DATE 2018. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-018-30303-1

2 *Avos D’Rebbi Nosson* 6:2

DID YOU KNOW?

- One aspect of procrastination is habit. One can be in the habit of procrastinating, or create a habit of not procrastinating.¹
- A person should not think that they can split their attitude between spiritual and secular pursuits. If one has work to do, spiritual or otherwise, it should be done as soon as possible.²
- One can channel one’s natural laziness, focusing it on instances where one is tempted to do an *aveirah*.³

1 *Mesillas Yesharim* Chap. 9

2 *Orchos Tzadikim* Chap. 15

3 *Orchos Tzadikim* Chap. 16