



GUEST CONTRIBUTOR ERIC LITTMAN

This week
at the kollel ➔

A “Seemless” Pursuit of Peace

For the Children of Israel are servants to Me—they are My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt; I am Hashem, your G-d. (25:55)

WHY DOES THE TORAH SEEM TO REPEAT itself by saying “They are My servants?” Weren’t we just told that “The Children of Israel are servants to Me?”

The holy Zohar says that Israel has two names before G-d. They are called servants, as is written, “They are My servants,” and they are called children, as is written (D’varim 14:1), “You are the children of Hashem, your G-d.”

On Rosh Hashanah and the High Holidays, and at other times of the year, we refer to Hashem as *Avinu Malkeinu*, our Father, our King. We seek to be considered first as children by *Avinu*, our Father, and then as servants to *Malkeinu*, our King. Although a servant may be able to walk through the Holy Palace, he is not given free access to the royal family’s private affairs. A king may seem to know his servants, but he can’t truly know them. However, parents unequivocally know their children and their suitability to knowing the family secrets.

When it comes to our relationship with Hashem, mitzvos are the keys to unlock those secrets. By observing the mitzvos, we clothe ourselves—our souls—in honorable and beautiful garments (*kavod*, honor, and *tif’eres*, glory), fit for children of the King. When we keep the mitzvos, we make the physical serve the spiritual; we unite our external self with our internal self; we make ourselves holy, spiritual people. A spiritual person not only studies G-d’s word, the Torah, but also gives food to

the poor, and money to support Torah study. A spiritual person uses a house to have guests, a car to take passengers, and new shoes to visit the sick.

In this week’s Torah portion, Hashem promises us peace and great rewards for following His mitzvos.

If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments, and perform them... I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down with none to scare [you]... (26:3–6)

It’s not enough for us to only observe “big” mitzvos or those that are easy. We need to work on ourselves especially in areas where we’re not so comfortable. We need to divest ourselves of jealousy, for example, and be more tolerant and patient with others. As Rambam said, “a person should inspect his own actions with a critical eye, while viewing the actions of others in a generous manner.” We need to exert as much energy, if not more, in interpersonal mitzvos as we do for mitzvos which overtly deal with our relationship with Hashem. It’s easy to create a persona, a façade, and portray the people who we want others to think we are—who we seem to be. It’s far more difficult to work on ourselves, to become the people we truly want to be. Our competitiveness, our desire to one-up our neighbors, to have the best, newest, and most expensive widget, impedes our ability to have *shalom*, peace.

Rabbi Pinchas of Dinovitch, in *P’ninei haChassidus*, says, in reference to our Torah portion:

Only when competition and jealousy diminish—suggested

in this verse by “peace in the land”—can the trembling, fear, and paranoia stop, “with no one to frighten [you].” As long as envy and competitive spirit continue, no one can have any peace, because jealousy fills everyone with trembling, from the fear that one’s neighbor may actually be successful at something. In the eyes of the competitive, this would cast a pall over the lives of all their neighbors.

When we properly serve Hashem, when we follow His mitzvos, we bring holiness into this physical world and into our bodies. The numerical value of the letters which spell the Hebrew word *avadai*, “My servants,” is 86, equal to the Name *Elokim*, as well as to *hateva*, nature, meaning that when we properly serve Hashem, we make ourselves G-dly people in the natural realm. As such, we need to make positive differences in others’ lives. As Dr. Forest E. Witcraft, a scholar and Boy Scout Executive, said, “One hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, how big my house was, or what kind of car I drove. But the world may be a little better, because I was important in the life of a child.” We need to lead by example. If we’re not leading by example, then we’re not doing the right thing... and we always want to do the right thing.

Every moment of every day, Hashem gives us the opportunity to actualize our full potential by fulfilling His mitzvos, which will ultimately lead us to peace. As the *Baal haTurim* points out, the letters of the Hebrew word *shalom* can be rearranged to spell *lishmo*, which means “for His name’s sake”—because *Shalom*

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At the Kollel

KEY: 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️🖐️🖐️ Advanced 🚺🚻 for men and women

Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbis Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM
ShabbosN/A

Mincha
Sunday7:45 PM
Monday–Thursday5:45 PM
Shabbos6:30 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday 10 PM
ShabbosN/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbis Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning
(private & small groups).....times vary

A “Seemless” Pursuit CONTINUED

is one of Hashem’s names.

We need to ask ourselves: Are we content to merely be servants, walking through the Holy Palace, or do we want to clothe ourselves in princely garments and gain access to the “family secrets?” Do we want our pride and ego to cloud our judgment and behavior, or do we truly want peace? Are we content to remain as we *seem*, or do we want to rise to the occasion, conquer and overcome our challenges, and actualize our full potential?

Our biggest challenge isn’t someone else. It’s the ache in our lungs, the burning in our legs, the pounding in our heart, and the voice *inside* us that yells “CAN’T!”

But we don’t have to listen. We can just push, harder, and then we’ll hear the voice whisper ‘can,’ and discover that the person we thought we were,

the person we *seemed* to be, is no match for the person we’ve become. There are 86,400 seconds in a day. It’s up to us to decide what to do with them.

Let’s not remain content with how things *seem*. Let’s strive to be the best we can be. As Milton Berle said, “I’d rather be a ‘could-be’ if I cannot be an ‘are,’ because a ‘could-be’ is a ‘maybe’ who is reaching for a star. I’d rather be a ‘has-been’ than a ‘might-have-been,’ by far; for a ‘might-have-been’ has never been, but a ‘has-been’ was once an ‘are.’”

Through observing the mitzvos and internalizing their lessons and deeper meanings, may we actualize our full potential, and grow as individuals and as a community, so that we may merit to be clothed in *kavod* and *tif’eres*, garments fit for children of the King. 🖐️



Mazal
tov,
Dovy!

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