

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### Don't Even Want to Do It

RABBI  
NOSSE  
WIGGINS



*Parshas Mishpatim* is replete with *mitzvos* pertaining to civil law and interpersonal relationships, both positive and negative in nature, and provides us with an excellent introduction to the world of *mitzvos*. We are accustomed to thinking that the essence of obeying a negative commandment is simply to refrain from committing the sin and avoid its harmful consequences. It would therefore follow that, as long as one doesn't transgress G-d's directives, he has achieved the vision of his Creator.

However, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (*V'eiyra* 7:18) suggests that there is far more depth to the fulfillment of a negative commandment than what appears on the surface. There are two words in the Hebrew language which mean *don't* – *Lo* and *Al*. Rabbi Hirsch questions why the Torah typically articulates a negative commandment with the word *Lo* as opposed to the word *Al*, and suggests that the word *Lo* connotes "a complete negation of desire," while the word *Al* implies "a mere suppression of desire." Thus, teaches Rabbi Hirsch, the Torah calls upon the Jew to not only refrain from wrongdoing but to remove the very need to commit the sin as well. To achieve true "negation of desire" requires a life-long commitment to spiritual growth and character development, which is essentially one the primary reasons that we were created.

Although this is a challenging task, it is not within the spirit of the Divine Will for one to simply refrain from sin while

allowing the desire for sin to live within oneself untouched. A consequence of this approach is what *Ramban* (*Kedoshim* 19:2) refers to as a *naval b'reshus hatorah*, which can be translated as "a denigrate within the parameters of what is permitted by the Torah." One whose passion for sin is still strongly rooted within him may search for opportunities that are *technically* within the parameters of Torah law although *principally* they are antithetical to G-d's will.

This notion is echoed by Rabbi Shimon Schwab in his *Iyun Tefillah*, on the words "*v'al tashlet banu yetzer harah*," which we recite each morning in the *yehe ratzon* prayer following the last of the *Birchas Hashachar*. After praying that we should not stumble and transgress the Torah on any level, be it accidental or intentional, we ask Hashem to save us from the control of the evil inclination which fuels our desire to sin. Aside from working to remove the desire from within by way of introspection as the word *Lo* implies, we beseech the Almighty to intervene and empower us overcome the *yetzer harah* which would utterly destroy us without Hashem's help (see *Kiddushin* 30b). Not only do we not want to sin in practice, we don't even want to feel the drive to sin. This is the essence of a Jew. 🧘



### Erev Shabbos Torah Time

(for boys, grades 1-5)

THIS WEEK AT 5:10 pm.

Zoom link [zoom.us/j/5959486315](https://zoom.us/j/5959486315)

## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Last week's *Parasha*

Q) In *Parshas Yisro* can be found the *Aseres Hadibros* (10 commandments). In regards to Shabbos, the Torah uses the words "*Zachor es Yom Hashabbos*" (remember the day of Shabbos), while in *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) the words "*Shamor es Yom Hashabbos*" (observe the day of Shabbos) are used. The Gemara (*Shavous* 20b) reconciles this discrepancy by explaining that Hashem gave both versions of the commandment in a single utterance, something that we human beings cannot comprehend. Why was it necessary for Hashem to perform such a superhuman, miraculous feat and say two different words at once? It would have been fine (and possibly less complicated) had *zachor* and *shamor* been uttered one after the other like the rest of the Torah.

A) The Ramban and Rabeinu Bachaya both suggest the following. The commandment to remember (*zachor*) requires us to sanctify the Shabbos by doing things such as reciting *Kiddush*, making *Havdalah*, wearing fine clothing, and devoting the day to the study of Torah. The injunction to observe (*shamor*) is a negative commandment that requires us to honor the Shabbos by refraining from work or any practices that would diminish the sanctity of the day.

Hashem specifically gave both versions of the commandment in a single utterance to indicate that both elements of the Shabbos are inseparable. He who makes *Kiddush* or performs some other positive behavior and then heads out to work or one who avoids desecration by sleeping for 24 hours every weekend, have not fulfilled the *mitzvah* and obligation of Shabbos in its entirety.

On this topic, I would like to leave you off with something to ponder about. Why did

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## THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

CONTINUED

Rav Shlomo Alkabitz (1500-1576) write in his famous work, *Lechi Dodi*, which is sung around the world every Friday night, “*Shamor v’zachor b’dibur echad*”? Shouldn’t “zachor” precede “shamor,” which is how it appears in the Torah?

Don’t tell me that the author was trying to get his name into the first letter of each stanza (*shin* for Shlomo) and it was a practical thing for a few reasons:

1) The *Yismach Moshe* (Zos *Habracha*) writes that all our *Zemiros* (Shabbos meal songs) and Shabbos inserts were written with *Ruach Hakodesh* (Divine inspiration) and isn’t switching the proper order just to make something rhyme selling it short?

2) In the Friday night *zemer*, *Menucha V’simcha*, the author (Rav Moshe Bar Klonimos) writes “*SHOMROV V’ZACHROV heima m’idim, ki l’shisha kol b’ruim v’omdim*.” Once again, we find the order reversed and in this case the rhyme would have worked just as well with zachor before shamor.


Please feel free to share your thoughts! 

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week’s)? Ask! If you would like to submit a question on the parasha, please email it to [parasha@cincykollel.org](mailto:parasha@cincykollel.org). Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.


## IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

Moses Frankel had invested time, energy, and a lot of his money into developing a product that he thought would be a surefire investment. The product was a new simpler way to seal asphalt driveway cracks that he had called Driveway Medic. The problem was that he needed to make a wedding for his daughter and did not have time for his product to catch on; he needed money soon. Not knowing where to turn, he asked his Rabbi for advice. The Rabbi assured him that Hashem will help and said that he would undertake to raise funds if needed. Two months passed and as the wedding date drew nearer Moses’s stress level went up correspondingly. Out of the blue he received a letter with what seemed to him to be a scam. The letter was from a company from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The letter said that they had gotten ahold of a brochure of his at an entrepreneurial trade show at which he had been. In the brochure it stated that the company would ship a sample of his product anywhere for ten dollars. This company therefore sent a check for ten dollars and asked for a sample, as they thought that it might take off in Abu Dhabi. Moses thought to himself that it would take more than ten dollars to send a sample of his product to Abu Dhabi. Coupled with the fact that he thought that his product would never sell there, as Abu Dhabi does not get the cold weather that causes asphalt cracks anyway, Moses decided to put the letter away and forget it. After the third letter came, he finally relented and sent away his sample to the UAE. When he received another letter several weeks later asking for a shipment of 10,000 pieces of his product along with a letter of guarantee from the bank of Dubai, he had to pinch himself to make he was not dreaming. He ran to the Rabbi to tell his good news. “It’s a miracle! I have enough profit

## A BA’AL HATURIM FOR YOU

Our *parasha* introduces many of the tort laws of the Torah whereby a judge of a Torah court would be called upon to settle the claims of one Jew upon another. *Ba’al Haturim* finds instructions to the judge hinted to in the first *passuk* of our *parasha*. “And these are the laws that you should place before them.” Using the Hebrew words as an acronym, the *passuk* tells us: **V’ayleh** – *V’chayav atah lachkor hadin*, you are obligated to investigate the law; **Hamishpatim** – *Hadayan m’tzuveh sheya’aseh p’shara terem ya’aseh mishpat*, the judge is obligated before judging the case to attempt to negotiate a settlement; **Asher** – *Im sh’neyhem rotzim*, if both are willing; **Tasim** – *Tishma sh’neyhem yachad m’dabrim*, listen to them together when they speak; **Lifneyhem** – *Lo p’nei nadiv yehdar hisnaker mayhem*, do not honor the important one rather act as a stranger to each one. 

Yaakov ben Asher, known as the *Ba’al Haturim*, was a scholar and biblical commentator who lived most of his life in Spain from approximately 1275 to approximately 1340. His classic commentary is printed in many editions of the *Chumash*.

off this to pay for the wedding!” he told the Rabbi. Months after the celebration of the wedding had passed, he received yet another letter from Abu Dhabi, and said as follows, “We have found that Driveway Medic does not have a market here in Abu Dhabi. Would you like to buy back any of your product?” 

## THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

### SHABBTAI TZVI (PART VII)

Recap: Shabbtai Tzvi sits comfortably in his prison cell in Constantinople as flocks of supporters arrive to visit their holy “Messiah.” Amongst the throngs of visitors were two Polish rabbis sent on a mission.

Aside from the fierce resistance of Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas (1610-98), a Sephardic *kabbalist* who served as rabbi of the Sephardic congregation of Hamburg, Shabbtai Tzvi was met with minimal opposition from the leading rabbis of Poland and Germany. Although Rabbi Sasportas authored *Tzitzas Novel Tzvi* (an abridged version was printed in Amsterdam in 1737), in which he logically refutes the claims and arguments of Shabbtai Tzvi and Nathan of Gaza based on statements from the Talmud and *Zohar* and great scholars such as Rambam and Rashba, the majority of rabbinic leadership in Europe mysteriously remained quiet. Some suggest that the rabbis chose to remain silent so not to disturb the great repentance movement which Nathan’s letters of salvation and redemption had encouraged. The famed Rabbi Dovid Ha-levi Segal, author of *Turei Zahav* on *Shulchan Aruch* and esteemed leader of Polish Jewry, then a man of eighty, was too ill to investigate the matter of Shabbtai Tzvi personally. Instead, he sent his son Rabbi Yeshaya and his step-son Rabbi Leib to sniff out the truth about the purported Messiah. The honorable delegation arrived and was immediately granted an audience with Shabbtai Tzvi. Shabbtai Tzvi was delighted to meet the Polish rabbis and assured them he would soon redeem Polish and Ukrainian Jewry from the bloodbath of *Tach V’tat* – the Chmielnicki massacres which had wiped out tens of thousands of Polish and Ukrainian Jews between 1648-49. Shabbtai Tzvi danced wildly with the rabbis while singing a verse from *Tehillim* annotated with his own Messianic touch. He also presented the rabbis with a special sugar cube which he promised would heal the elderly and sick Rabbi Dovid Ha-levi Segal upon consumption. (It remains unknown what exactly was reported to Rabbi Dovid Ha-levi Segal and what his response was or whether he ate the sugar cube that Shabbtai Tzvi sent him.)

It appeared that although the “Messiah” had been arrested and was sitting in prison, the nation as a whole held firm to their belief in Shabbtai Tzvi’s legitimacy and the looming redemption. 