

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Do you mean it?

RABBI
MOSHETZVI
CRYSTAL



This week's *parasha* is chock full of *mitzvos*, and it is interesting to note that although at first glance many would seem randomly placed, our sages teach about the explanation of the succession of several sequences of *mitzvos* that appear. One such sequence is the following *mitzvos*: Sending a mother bird away before taking eggs from the nest; building a fence on the roof of your home; not planting different species of plants together (*kilayim*); not working different species of animals together; not wearing a garment made of wool and linen together; and wearing *tzitzis* on a four cornered garment. On this our sages say: If you perform the *mitzvah* of sending the mother bird you will merit building a home and performing the *mitzvah* of building a rooftop fence. If you perform the *mitzvah* of building a rooftop fence, you will merit keeping the *mitzvos* of *kilayim* in your own vineyard and field. If you avoid *kilayim* in your field, you will merit to have beautiful clothes and fulfill the *mitzvah* of not wearing wool and linen together. This is the idea of *mitzvah gomeres mitzvah*, that performing one *mitzvah* gives you the merit to perform another *mitzvah*. I once heard a thought from Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky on a deeper significance to this chain of *mitzvos* that we have here. The first *mitzvah* mentioned is sending away the mother bird. This *mitzvah* is described by the Torah as being performed in an ownerless field to an ownerless bird. Hashem, so to speak, now says, you have brought

Torah in to the peripheral parts of your life, will you bring the Torah into your home? The person is now given a house. If he performs the *mitzvah* of making a fence, Hashem, so to speak, says, you have allowed the Torah to dictate how your home is built, will you allow the Torah to dictate how you work for your daily bread? If you let the Torah dictate that, will you let the Torah dictate what is even more personal, what you wear to clothe yourself? How far will you go in accepting the Torah to guide you? Will you take the Torah as a guide for everything in your life as it was intended to be? This is an underlying message and challenge to all of us, especially as we move towards the day of accepting G-d's kingship, Rosh Hashana. When we proclaim Hashem as King, what part of ourselves are we really proclaiming Hashem King over? How we deal with others? How we make our money? The most personal parts of our lives? How serious are we really when we say Hashem is "Hamelech," the King? May we all merit to take the Torah into all parts of our lives and Hashem as our king in every aspect of our being. 🙏



LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL

WITH
RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN



This week my family and I had the *zechus* (merit) to attend two different weddings on the East Coast. Considering that the first *chasunah*, for Jason Roden, was called for Sunday afternoon in Brooklyn, we had no choice but to depart shortly after *Havdala* and play the rest by ear. At one point the children all dozed off in the van and were sleeping peacefully, which made driving through the night feasible. As the first rays of light became visible, I realized that I would arrive at our destination too late to catch a *minyán* for Shachris and would be forced to *daven b'yichidus* (alone). Trying to make the best of the situation, I checked the time of sunrise at my present location, pulled to the side of the highway to *daven Shemone Esrei* at *netz* (sunrise), and then returned to the highway, thankful that nobody woke up in the meantime. All of a sudden, a truck changed lanes and

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LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL

CONTINUED

pulled up right in front of me. I am not someone who usually reads the bumper stickers and posters attached to vehicles, but this one caught my attention. On top it said "Did you pray yet?" Underneath, there was another sticker which read, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. – ISAIAH 55:6"

I was taken completely aback. First of all, we are taught that those words from Yeshaya are a reference to the month of Elul, when Hashem is closer to us. Furthermore, it was then that I remembered that I accidentally omitted *L'Dovid Ori V'yishi* (Psalm 27). It was almost as if the *Ribono Shel Olam* was sending me a reminder to stay focused and finish the final *Tefillah*. As I pulled up closer (AKA tailgating) to take a picture, the driver got nervous and honked his air horn which to me sounded like a loud shofar! I switched lanes, pulled up to the driver and waved, thanking him for being there for me, without even knowing it!

When my family woke up, I commented "Some people naturally remember (even at 6:36 a.m. in middle of Pennsylvania) that it is the month of Elul, while others need reminders!" 🙏

A SHINING EXAMPLE

RABBI EPHRAIM SKOLNIK

The great Rosh Yeshiva Reb Isser Zalmen Meltzer (1870-1953) was walking home from *shiur* with his students as he usually did every day. As he approached his front door, he walked up the steps alone but then uncharacteristically stopped for a few moments at the door then turned and walked back down the steps as if he did not want to go in. His students were quite surprised, as Rabbi Meltzer usually went straight home after giving *shiur* as he was exhausted. Rabbi Meltzer continued walking around the block for a few more minutes and then the same scene repeated itself he walked up the steps stopped by the door for a few minutes and then walked down the steps again and continued walking. One of the students built up the courage to ask him what was going on. Rabbi Meltzer replied, "As I was walking up my steps and about to enter my house, I heard my housekeeper singing to herself. She is a widow who has had a very hard life. Singing and music is one of the few enjoyments she has. How can I take that away from her? So, I continued walking till she finished." Thinking about others. The makeup of greatness. 🙏

HAFTORAH HAPPENINGS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

NEW!

Being that Rosh Chodesh Elul fell out on Shabbos this year, on Shabbos Re'eh we read the *haftarah* for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh and missed the third of the *Shiva Denechemtah* (seven *haftarahs* of consolation). Therefore, this week we read the *haftarah* of both this week and what we would have read on *Parshas Re'eh* (don't worry, it's not that long). In (54:9-10), Yeshaya prophesied, "For a brief moment I have forsaken you, and with abundant mercy shall I gather you in. With a slight wrath have I concealed my countenance from you for a moment but with eternal kindness shall I show you mercy, said your redeemer Hashem." If we think for one moment about the meaning of these *posukim* it is truly astounding. If two thousand years of crusades, pogroms, ghettos, persecution, and holocaust is in Hashem's eyes only called a slight wrath, we can only imagine what will be the ultimate redemption, which the *Navi* calls great mercy. What we do know is that it will definitely be worth the wait! 🙏



NEW!

TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YEHUDAH LEVI

It is a widespread, primarily *Ashkenazic* custom to blow the shofar every day of the month of Elul, the month preceding Rosh Hashana. As such, the blasts of the shofar herald in a time of introspection and reconnection. Many *Rishonim* (early commentators) find the source of this *minhag* in the *Tannaic* work *Perkei D'Rabi Eliezer*, tracing its root back to the period of the Mishna, or 1st and 2nd century C.E. As elucidated by the *Perisha* (R' Yehoshua Falk, 17th century), *Perkei D'Rabi Eliezer* explains that the reason for blowing the shofar beginning with the month of Elul is because it was then that, accompanied by the sound of the shofar, Moshe *Rabbeinu* ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the second *luchos* (tablets). It was through the shofar that G-d was aroused to forgive the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf, and it is through our own shofar blowing that we strive to arouse G-d's mercy once again. In addition, the piercing call of the shofar serves to awaken all of the Jewish people to the spirit of repentance. The prevailing practice seems to be that the shofar is blown only in the beginning of the day following the morning services, although some communities sound the shofar in the afternoon or evening following the *mincha* prayers as well. 🙏

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