



LOUGHTON SHUL
MORE THAN A

INSPIRE

KI TZEISEI - 9 ELUL - 29 AUGUST

DIY DESTINY

We read in Deuteronomy 22:8: “When you build a new house, you must place a guard-rail around your roof so that you will not bring blood upon your house should any man fall from the unenclosed roof.”

The Hebrew wording for “should any man fall” is “ki yipol hanofel,” which literally means “should the one who falls fall.” The commentators say that this unusual phrasing implies that this individual—known as “the one who falls”—was actually destined to fall off a roof and lose his life.

So the question is, if that person was in fact pre-ordained to fall, why am I at fault just because it happened in my house? Why am I responsible for the fulfillment of his destiny? Why should his blood be on my hands?

Jewish philosophers answer this question by saying that although we definitely believe in destiny—that whatever happens is part of the Almighty’s vast eternal plan—nonetheless, every individual has an obligation to do his or her best to take precautions and prevent tragedy. Although we believe in miracles we are not permitted to rely upon them.

There is a Yiddish proverb that “the man destined to drown will drown even in a glass of water.” But that doesn’t mean that you have to be the one to dunk his head into the glass. In short, we believe in the concept of bashert, but we mustn’t live by it.

One may ask, is it not an expression of faith to leave it all to G d? To put our trust implicitly in Him that He will provide? That He will protect and guard us from accidents? In the Grace after Meals we say that G d is “the feeder and provider for all.” So if G d is supporting me, I might ask, why must I shlepp off to work? The answer is that it is a Jewish belief that “G d helps those who help themselves.” That’s why it is a commandment of the Torah to safeguard our health. Likewise, we are not to live dangerously by leaving roofs unenclosed, swimming pools unfenced, or our doors unlocked.

A few chapters before the command to erect fences on roofs, the Torah states that “The L rd, your G d, shall bless you in all that you do.” Meaning that to succeed in any endeavour, we need G d’s blessing, but He blesses us in all that we do. In order to merit His blessing, we must first lay the groundwork and create the opportunity for G d’s blessings to be realized.

This is the approach of the farmer who knows that the success of his crop depends on G d granting rain, but that the blessing of rain will only help after he has tilled, ploughed and planted.

There is the story of the shlemiel who kept praying to G d that He make him win the lottery and solve all his financial problems. Day after day he implored the Almighty to grant him his personal salvation via the lottery. When the lottery was drawn, unfortunately our shlemiel was not the winner. So he went back to the synagogue the next day and cried out to G d bitterly, “L rd, you let me down. I prayed so hard. Why didn’t I win the lottery?”

And a deep, booming voice rang out from the heavens saying, “Because you never bought a ticket!”

The concept of playing a role in shaping our destinies applies to every area of life. As the famous golfer Gary Player said, “The more I practice, the luckier I get.” If you want to be mazaldig, don’t depend on mazal alone. If you want to have nachas from your children, don’t rely on the luck of the draw that they will marry the right person.

Parents have to plough and plant (and pray very hard) for nachas to happen. In the Psalmist’s words, which we say before the Grace After Meals on holidays in Shir Hamaalot (Psalm 126), “He who sows with tears, will reap in joy.”

Is It Unlucky to Sit at the Corner of a Table?

Question:

In my family, it is strictly forbidden for any unmarried person to sit at the corner of the table.

We were told from a young age that if you do sit there, you will never get married. To this day, I can't bring myself to sit at a corner or let anyone else do so. Is this a Jewish belief?

Answer:

This belief is widely held and has been handed down for generations in a range of cultures. If your grandmother is Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, or Ukrainian, there is a good chance she grew up with this superstition. The fact that many Jewish families originate from these countries may explain why so many share this belief, but it doesn't come from a Jewish source. Judaism forbids the adoption of beliefs and practices that are not sourced in our own tradition, unless they are backed by logic. So if a black cat passes in front of you, we don't believe that indicates bad luck. But walking under a ladder may bring bad fortune—if you bump the ladder and someone falls on you. Avoiding ladders makes sense; avoiding black cats doesn't.

What about table corners?

Intensive statistical study into the single status of corner-sitters has yet to produce any conclusive results. But using logic alone, one could argue that sitting at a corner may actually make you more marriageable, not less. It depends on your motive. If the table is crowded, and you choose the corner spot to make more room at the table for others to sit, then you are a great candidate for marriage. Making space for another is the first step in any relationship. On the other hand, if you sit there because you can't make up your mind which side to sit on, then perhaps this indicates an indecisive personality. Someone who finds it hard to take a position on anything—who is never here nor there but always lost in between—might have a harder time committing to a relationship. That is a corner you don't want to get stuck at.

SHUL TIMES

Shabbat Times

Candle Lighting

7:36pm

Shabbat Ends 8:46pm

Friday

7pm with Rabbi Yanky

Kabbalat Shabbat

outside Shul & on

zoom

Artscroll

1046

1201

Living Torah

966

1238

PARSHA SUMMARY

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (mitzvot) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitzei. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, returning a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of kilayim (forbidden plant and animal hybrids). Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who falsely accuses his wife of infidelity. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a mamzer (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of Moabite or Ammonite descent; a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian. Our Parshah also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an escaped slave; the duty to pay a worker on time, and to allow anyone working for you—man or animal—to "eat on the job"; the proper treatment of a debtor, and the prohibition against charging interest on a loan; the laws of divorce (from which are also derived many of the laws of marriage); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for yibbum ("levirate marriage") of the wife of a deceased childless brother, or chalitzah ("removing of the shoe") in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her. Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to remember "what Amalek did to you on the road, on your way out of Egypt."

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Isaiah 54:1-10. This week's haftorah is the fifth of a series of seven "Haftarot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh

Hashanah. Forsaken Jerusalem is likened to a barren woman devoid of children. G-d enjoins her to rejoice, for the time will soon come when the Jewish nation will return and proliferate, repopulating Israel's once desolate cities. The prophet assures the Jewish people that G-d has not forsaken them. Although He has momentarily hid His countenance from them, He will gather them from their exiles with great mercy.

The haftorah compares the final Redemption to the pact G-d made with Noah. Just as G-d promised to never bring a flood over the entire earth, so too He will never again be angry at the Jewish people. "For the mountains may move and the hills might collapse, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace collapse."

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK CHAIM ARUCHIM

Jacobs Deborah Father Hershel ben Mendle 13 Elul

Adams Lesley Mother Gerda bas Daniel 14 Elul

Kurt Allan Mother Sara Rivkah Bas Yechial Joseph 15 Elul

JEWISH HUMOUR

Chaim Yankel decided to venture out of his native Chelm to get a job in a nearby city working at the grocery store. On his first day, a lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the grocery store, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked Chaim Yankel, "Do these turkeys get any bigger?" Chaim Yankel replied, "No, they're dead."

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

A magician was boasting one day at how long he could hold his breath under water. His record was 6 minutes. A kid that was listening said, "that's nothing, I can stay under water for 10 minutes using no types of equipment or air pockets!" The magician told the kid if he could do that, he'd give him \$10,000. The kid did it and won the money. Can you figure out how?

**Answer to last week's Riddle.
Your age**

STORY TIME

In a small town in white Russia there lived a rich Jew who was considered to be a real miser by all the townspeople. Whenever he was approached for a donation, he would take out a rusty copper five kopecks coin, and offer it as his contribution. People would throw the rusty coin back at the miser and eventually stopped approaching him for donations altogether, until something quite remarkable happened. A young couple, both poor orphans, were soon to be married. The townspeople provided them with their needs and also made sure that they would have a fine wedding feast. Indeed, everyone had contributed to this special fund and was entitled to participate in the simcha (happy occasion), except the miser. No one had even asked him for a contribution. In the midst of all the preparations for the wedding, without any warning, the groom was taken into custody by the Chief of Police for military service. The Chief of Police was known to be anti-Semitic. When he heard about the wedding, he thought it would be a golden opportunity to strike at all the Jews. He sent for the groom on his wedding day!

A special delegation hurried to the Police Chief to arrange for the groom's release. The chief threw them out, warning that they would be sent to Siberia if they continued to harass him. At this critical time, the revered and famous Rabbi Shneur Zalman arrived in town. He had made the match between the young couple and had come to join in their simcha. When he heard what had happened, he asked the rabbi of the town to accompany him to see the Police Chief. "We've come to ask you to release the bridegroom, who is to be married tonight. We are ready to pay the tax to obtain his immediate release. Just name the amount," the Rebbe said in a firm voice. The Police Chief, an avid card player and gambler, had gotten himself into serious debt. He now saw a chance to squeeze a large sum of money from the Jews in his town. "One thousand rubles," said the Chief. Without hesitation, Rabbi Shneur Zalman replied, "You will receive this amount before sunset." As soon as they were outside, the delegation asked the Rebbe, "How can we possibly raise such a large sum of money from our poor townspeople, and before sunset today?" "G-d, the father of orphans, will not forsake them," the Rebbe answered confidently. Rabbi Shneur Zalman insisted on going to the "miser" first. "We will give him the opportunity to participate in the great mitzva (commandment) of redeeming the imprisoned," said Rabbi Shneur Zalman. Arriving at the rich man's house, Rabbi Shneur Zalman told the man what had happened to the groom. The rich man said nothing but brought out the five kopek coin and offered it to the Rabbi. Rabbi Shneur Zalman quickly took the coin, saying, "May you have the merit to do many more mitzvot." As they got up to leave, the Jew blurted out, "I think my contribution was too small. Here is a whole ruble." The Rebbe took the ruble and repeated his blessing. As they turned toward the door, the Jew called out, "Excuse me Rebbe, I'd like to give a larger donation." He took out a ten-ruble note. The Rebbe took it graciously and blessed him as before. This performance repeated itself several times with the Rebbe blessing the man each time. Finally the Jew burst into tears. "I once gave a beggar a five kopek coin, and he threw it back in my face. I was so annoyed that I said to myself, 'This coin is going to be my donation, whatever the cause, until someone accepts it with a friendly word. Since then, that five kopek piece has always been returned to me with scorn and abuse, until people stopped coming to me altogether for charity.'" "You, saintly Rebbe, are the first person who accepted my donation with friendliness. You gave me the opportunity to participate in this great mitzva and you found it in your heart to bless me. I shall never forget what you have done." Now, I shall give you the full amount needed to pay for the groom's release. I hope and pray that it will make up for the tzedaka (charity) opportunities I have missed." The Rebbe blessed him again that G-d should enable him to give charity with an open hand and a joyous heart. The groom was released after the money was paid and the wedding was celebrated with unsurpassed joy and gratitude. One of the most distinguished guests, in addition to the Rebbe, was the Jew who had donated the whole ransom money.

FOOD 4 THE SOUL

The ancients looked up at the heavens and gazed at the stars in their constellations. They honored them as stewards of divine energy and life, as the embodiment of all forces of nature and the origin of human passions. They were wise, but they were fools—they abandoned the Master for the servant. For in truth there is only One and all else is but a tool in His hand. Modern man looks up to the headlines of the finance page and sees there all the forces that will make or break his career, his retirement plans, his success as a human being. He too is a fool, for in truth there is only One and all else is but a tool in His hand.