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# בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS  
KI SEITZEI

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## RETURN TO OUR SENSES

“Can a *Shofar* sound in the city, and the people not tremble?”<sup>1</sup> This *Passuk* is used in reference to the days of *Elul*, and the coming Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah. The reality, though, is a stark contrast to this phenomenon. Instead of trembling, we often feel an emotional detachment. What can be impeding our appreciation of Rosh Hashanah? A *Passuk* in this week’s *Parshah* may shed some light on the answer.

We are reminded in our *Parshah* to remember how *Amalek* ambushed us as we left *Mitzrayim*. The *Passuk*<sup>2</sup> uses the term “קרך,” “surprised” in reference to the ambush. This term is also related to the word “קר,” which means “cold.” Rashi<sup>3</sup> explains that after the Jewish nation left Egypt, the nations of the world were afraid to fight with *Klal Yisrael*. The people of *Amalek* ‘cooled off’ the *Bnei Yisrael* by warring with them. Once people saw that you can indeed fight with the Jewish nation, the possibility did not seem so remote anymore. Thus, although *Amalek* was soundly defeated, they had removed the aura of invulnerability, allowing others to entertain thoughts of war.

By witnessing others do a crime, we become less sensitive to its implications. And if we ourselves are the ones who have committed the crime, we are even more hardened to the consequences. Thus we find in the *Gemara*,<sup>4</sup> if a person repeats an *Aveirah*, it becomes acceptable to him. This may explain our tepid attitude to the coming days - we have become accustomed to our habits and even our errors.

What, then, is the remedy? The good news is that our true feelings are still inside us, they may just be covered over by our actions. Therefore, the *Shaarei Teshuvah*<sup>5</sup> suggests that we start with removing ourselves from our misdeeds. By simply doing that for a period of time, we will reignite the feelings of closeness to Hashem. And when we take those first steps, Hashem promises to assist us in bringing us close to Him.

1 Amos 3:6

2 Devarim 25:18

3 *ibid.* s.v. אשר קרך

4 *Kiddushin* 20a

5 Chap. 1, s.v. העיקר השני & העיקר הראשון

**By witnessing others do a crime, we become less sensitive to its implications.**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

By definition, if we are not sensitive to some of the things that we do, we will be apathetic in our desire to change them. After all, if they’re “really not a big deal,” why spend time and effort to grow in those areas? How can we overcome this apathy, and inspire ourselves to grow?

Luckily, apathy does not necessarily mean that we have removed our sensitivities, rather, it means that they’ve become overgrown with habit. Deep down, though, we can understand the disagreeable nature of some of our actions. How, then, does one tap into those feelings?

The trick is to remove ourselves from our current situation. We can do this mentally - how would we feel if we made a habit not to do such-and-such? How would our friends and family look at us? Even though we may not think “such-and-such” is important right now, when we think in the positive - what our lives would be like if we worked on a particular area, we can tap into the importance that particular area may have.

Doing this may inspire us to grow in areas we may have never thought needed work!



**Torah can never be truly sustained within a person who has not become a Baal Midos Tovos.**

- Rabbeinu Yonah on Pirkei Avos 3:17

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# SURROUNDED BY SMELLS

Yeshivas Tiferes Naftali\* was having some remodeling done. As often happens, one problem leads to another, and the next thing the administration knew, the street in front of the building had to be torn up. One day, as the construction was going on, Rabbi Yehuda Klein, the principal, bumped into Rabbi Nosson Stelter, one of the rebbeim in the yeshiva. "Rabbi Stelter," said Rabbi Klein, "I have to tell you what I just witnessed. If it didn't happen to me, I wouldn't believe it!"

His interest piqued, Rabbi Stelter turned to Rabbi Klein and nodded. "As you know, we have to park a bit away from the yeshiva, since the street outside is closed. During lunch today I had to run to do an errand, so I hurried to my car, and drove off. When I returned, I parked a block away, and made my way to the building. As it's somewhat hot outside, there were very few people walking on the street.

"As I neared the building, though, I heard talking. I looked around, but there was no one in sight! The voices were as clear as I'm speaking to you right now, but I stood there, confused. I walked closer and closer to the source of the noise, and it brought me to the side of the sewer that the workers are fixing. The smell was overwhelming, but I was determined to find the speaker. I looked down into the sewer, and right there, sitting on the floor, were two workers having a conversation, while eating their lunch! In the sewer! I couldn't believe it! I was so surprised, I just burst out laughing!

"I'll tell you, Rabbi Stelter, it's a real lesson. It really is - it occurred to me, when you are in the sewer, you just don't smell the stench!"

**"When you are in the sewer, you just don't smell the stench!"**

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Hashem waits for our *Teshuvah* more than a father waits for his son.<sup>1</sup>
- The first two of the thirteen *Middos* of Hashem, are "Hashem, Hashem." This implies that after we do *Teshuvah*, Hashem views us the same exact way as if we had never done the *Aveirah* in the first place.<sup>2</sup>
- Some may give up before even attempting *Teshuvah*. The antidote is to view oneself as if they were just born and have a totally clean slate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabbah*, 31:30

<sup>2</sup> *Beis Elokim, Sha'ar HaTeshuva*, Chap. 1

<sup>3</sup> *Yesod HaTeshuvah of Rabbeinu Yonah*