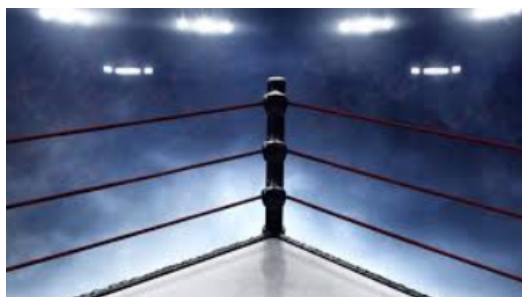


STORY

Keep Fighting



By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

R' Avraham Alter ran a Yeshiva in Chicago for many years. He worked together with Baalei Teshuva. There was one fellow who was straddling the fence for a number of years. R' Avraham very much wanted this fellow to make a commitment. And he told the fellow, "You got to do something. You can't keep wavering." The fellow made a commitment to keep kosher, but he needed one more Superdog.

"Superdog" is Nathan's of Chicago. It's the premier hotdog establishment and it's wildly popular. The fellow sat down with his final Superdog, slathered in mustard, covered in sauerkraut. He's about to take a bite and a man in a suit sits down next to him. They start talking. It turns out their kids go to the same school.

Our fellow eats his Superdog. As he's eating it, the other guy asks him, "Do you like Superdog?" The fellow says, "Love Superdog. But interestingly, it is my



last Superdog." "Really? Why!?" He says, "Because it's financially difficult for me to be able to afford it. Constant hotdogs are taking a toll on my family." And even though it sounded a little bit ridiculous, he didn't want to disclose that he's not going to eat Superdogs because he's starting to keep kosher.

Well, the other guy looks at him and says, "That breaks my heart. Here is what I want to do for you. It bothers me that somebody should stop eating Superdogs because of financial considerations. After all, I own Superdog." And he pulls out of his pocket a card. The card says: "This card entitles you to a lifetime supply of free Superdogs."

The fellow runs back to Avraham Alter and says, "What is God trying to tell me? I'm ready to keep kosher and now this?" So R' Alter says to him, "God is trying to tell you that the Yezter Horah is never going to give up. You made a commitment. Well, that commitment is not going to come easy. The Yezter Horah is going to constantly fight with you. All Hashem wants is for you to keep fighting."

The fellow made the commitment and soon kept all Torah and Mitzvos. Today, hanging in his dining room is a framed picture of that card. "Free lifetime supply of Superdog." He knows: every day is a battle, but that is all the Ribono Shel Olam wants from us - to keep on fighting.

Sometimes giving up just one thing that is precious to us can make all the difference. What are we ready to give up for Hashem?

SMILE!

IT'S CONTAGIOUS



Day 33 of social distancing: Struck up a conversation with a spider today. Seems nice, he's a web designer.



Remember all those times when you wished the weekend would last forever. Well, wish granted. Happy now?



Yesterday I ate a clock, it was very time consuming. Especially when I went back for seconds.



Dental hygienist: Your gums are in great shape. Me: They should be, I run them all the time.



Anyone else getting a tan from the light in the fridge?



Amazing new lipstick that helps you lose weight.



True Teshuvah



The Medrash says that Pinchas drove his spear straight through the bodies of Zimri and Kuzbi the Midyanite, as they were sinning. Then, G-d gave Pinchas divine strength and he was able to lift both of their dead bodies up out of the tent, while still on the spear, for all to see that they

had been killed for their sins.

The Holy Ohr Hachaim Hakodesh whose Yartzeit was this week, writes that through doing this, Pinchas made the sin of illicit relations look disgusting in the eyes of the Yidden and thereby caused a tremendous Kiddush Hashem.

On a similar note, the Ohr Hachayim writes as well in another place in this week's Parsha, that G-d commanded the Jews *"Tzror es Hamidyanim Ve'hikesem Osam"* - meaning, "Make the Midyanim hated in your eyes and destroy everything of theirs". So the Ohr Hachayim asks, why do we need to hate them and destroy everything, why not be able to benefit from the booty? And he answers that when it comes to immoral conduct (that the Midyanites caused the Yidden to sin with), the only way for the Jews to atone properly would be if they turn their hearts to hate these sins, and destroy all that is related to it. For as long as the lust of the sins remain alive in a Jew's heart, he cannot properly atone for sins of this nature. Instead, we must try to first arouse a disgust for these sins in our hearts - and then we can achieve a true Teshuvah.

Treaty of PEACE

We saw in last week's Parsha how the wrath of G-d was kindled against the Jewish people for sinning with the Moabite women,

and a great plague broke out killing 24,000 people. It was only through the zealotness of Pinchas that the wrath of G-d was quieted. We can learn from this two important lessons:



1) As the Zohar writes, there is no sin that arouses the wrath and zealotness of G-d like that of the prohibitions of Arayos.

2) We can please G-d and give him great joy, when we, like Pinchas, arouse our own wrath and zealotness AGAINST these sins. Not against others, but against our own mind's tendency to stray after unhealthy and sinful lusting.

In the same way that G-d is zealous in detesting and in punishing immoral transgression, we too must use this very characteristic of zealotness when dealing with these desires. We must arouse a zealotness in our hearts to abhor and revile the poisonous lusting of our hearts that pulls us away from G-d and arouses His wrath against us. In other words, instead of becoming triggered by something we may have seen by mistake, we need to learn to let our zealotness for G-d become aroused in our minds and hearts instead.

And one who indeed trains himself to arouse his zealotness in this regard, will achieve true inner "peace". Like G-d said to Pinchas in this week's Parsha: "Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Ahron the Priest has cooled my wrath from upon the Jewish people through his zealotness in their midst, and therefore I did not destroy the Jewish people in MY zealotness. Therefore I say, I give him my treaty of PEACE".

PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Track your progress



The act of monitoring alone can help you make a lot of progress. It's easy, you can use any paper calendar for it. Each night, make a check mark if you had a clean day, and minus sign if you had a fall. If you want to go digital you can use GYE's 90 day chart, or one of the many apps that are geared for tracking habits.

Rabbi M. Kamenetzky

After Bila'am's failed efforts to curse the Jewish people, he devised another ploy. He advised the nations of Midian and Moav to lure the Jews to sin through salacious activities. Midian complied wholeheartedly, offering its daughters as conspirators in the profanity. The scheme worked. The Jews cavorted with Midianite women, and the wrath of Hashem was aroused. A plague ensued and thousands of Jews died.

In this week's portion, Hashem commands his people to administer justice. "Make the Midianites your enemies and attack them!" For they antagonized you through their conspiracy that they conspired against you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague, in the matter of Peor" (Numbers 25:17-18). Eventually Jews go to war with Midian.

The issue that may confront the modern thinker is simple. War? Over what? They were not fighting over land. There was no dispute over oil or natural resources. Why such vehemence to the point of physical attack over the incident at Peor? Why call for such physical retribution for an act that caused spiritual sedition through secular seduction?

Rabbi Eliezer Sorotzkin of Lev L'Achim related the following story:



In November 1938, before the onset of World War II, some Jewish children had the opportunity to escape from Nazi Germany and resettle in

England through what became known as kindertransport. Unfortunately, there were not enough religious families able to accept these children, and other families who were willing to take them were not willing to raise the children with Jewish traditions. The Chief Rabbi of London, Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski, embarked on a frantic campaign to secure funding to ensure that every child would be placed in a proper Jewish environment.

Rabbi Abramski called one wealthy Jewish industrialist and begged him for a donation sizable enough to ensure that the children would be raised in a proper Jewish environment. "It is pikuach nefesh!" cried Rabbi Abramski.

At that point, the tycoon became incensed. "Rabbi," he said, "Please do not use that term flippantly. I know what pikuach nefesh is. Pikuach nefesh means a matter of life and death! When I was young, my parents were very observant. When my baby sister was young, she was very sick. We had to call the doctor, but it was on Shabbos. My father was very conscientious of the sanctity of Shabbos. He would never desecrate Shabbos. But our rabbi told us that since this is a matter of life and death, we were allowed to desecrate the Shabbos! He called it pikuach nefesh. "Rabbi Abramski", the man implored, "with all due respect. The children are already here in England. They are safe from the Nazis. The only issue is where to place them. How they are raised is not pikuach nefesh!" With that, the man politely bade farewell and hung up the phone.

That Friday evening, the wealthy man was sitting at dinner, when the telephone rang incessantly. Finally, the man got up from his meal and answered the phone.

As he listened to the voice on the other end of the line, his face went pallid.

"This is Abramski. Please. I would not call on the Sabbath if I did not think this was pikuach nefesh. Again, I implore you. We need the funds to ensure that these children will be raised as Jews."

Needless to say, the man responded immediately to the appeal.

We understand matters of life and death, justice and injustice, war and peace, in corporeal terms. It is difficult to view spirituality in those terms as well.

The Torah teaches us that our enemies are not merely those who threaten our physical existence, but those who threaten our spiritual existence as well. Throughout the generations, we faced those who would annihilate us physically and others who would be just as happy to see us disappear as Jews.

What our enemies were unable to do to the Jewish people with bullets and gas, they have succeeded in doing with assimilation and spiritual attrition.

The decadent and immoral society that we live in today is also out to destroy us. We must recognize this struggle as Pikuach Nefesh and take a lesson from this week's Parsha to wage WAR against the negative influences of our environment in our own personal lives.

Treaty of PEACE

By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski



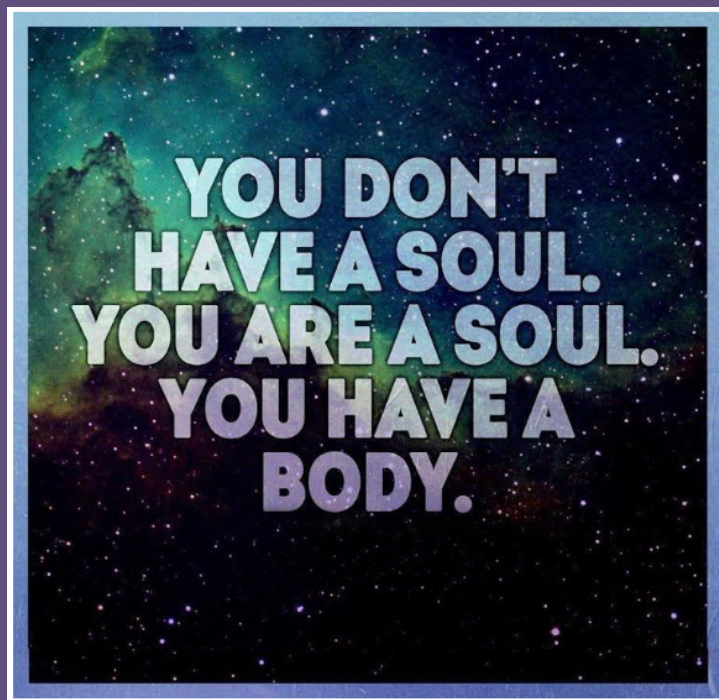
Moses asked Hashem to appoint a leader to succeed him, "A person who can understand and relate to each individual" (Numbers 27:16, Rashi). Hashem responded, "Take to yourself Joshua, a man in whom there is spirit." How does Hashem's response satisfy Moses' request?

The human being is a composite creature, comprised of a body and a spirit. The spirit is the force that directs a person away from self-gratification, to be devoted to a higher goal.

A person who is preoccupied with satisfying his own desires cannot empathize fully with others. The ability to relate to and understand each individual requires extraordinary empathy. Such empathy is possible only in a person who has subordinated one's self-gratifying drives to the spirit.

In the morning service we read, "The superiority of man over animal is naught, save for the pure soul." We can pride ourselves in being dignified human beings only if our behavior is under the direction of the spirit rather than the animal body.

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK



DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

These two lines don't look straight, do they?

Well they are!

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!

