

Dvar Torah for Parshat Emor

Based on *Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom* ##80–81

“If one slays a human being, he shall be put to death...if one maims his fellow, he must be penalized accordingly...” (Leviticus 24:17,19).

WARNING! HUMAN BEINGS MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.

At the start of the day, right after we finish *Birkhot HaShachar* (the Morning Blessings), we offer this brief, under appreciated prayer:

May it be your will God, our God and God of our ancestors, to rescue us today and every day from brazen people...bad people...bad friends, bad neighbors...the evil eye, gossip, tattletales, false witness, being hated, false accusations...Satan the Destroyer...harsh opponents....

Imagine you lived by yourself, all alone with no human contact. (Maybe you do.) And imagine that, God forbid, you had all sorts of questions and doubts: Does God exist? (Yes.) Is the Torah really true, always true, absolutely true? (Yes, yes and again yes.) Were Rebbe Shimon, the Arizal, the Baal Shem Tov and Rebbe Nachman really such big tzaddikim? (Of course!) On your own, you would still end up on the right path, despite every type of confusion, doubt and worry you might face. But most of us do not live in seclusion. We live with others.

And other people can be great deterrents. People have more power to harm us than our own evil inclination. Their influence is strong enough to prevent us from being as dedicated to God, or from learning and associating with a true tzaddik, as we want to be.

Rebbe Nachman explains that the evil inclination, because he is merely a type of angel, has power only in a particular realm, but no more. On the other hand, each human being is a microcosm with influence that extends to every realm. Therefore, the wrong person can keep you from God more than Satan himself (*Likutey Halakhot, Milah 5:21; Gezeilah 5:17*).

People confuse us. Some of the pernicious methods they use are cynicism and sarcasm, ridicule and parody of anything sacred. These are the worst types of deterrent and confusion, especially when they come from the seemingly religious. They can be worse than blatant heresy, since most Jews recognize the dangers of heresy and avoid it. They know it can drag them down, God forbid.

But people are not so careful to avoid sarcasm and parody, especially when it emanates from people who seem legitimate and couch their opinions in religious expressions. People do not shun them because they are wolves in sheep's clothing. So they harm, confuse and even kill people (see *Likutey Moharan II, Lesson #18*), by preventing them from genuinely serving God.

You have to deal with people, but you don't have to be a victim. Pray sincerely, every day, to be protected and to be one of the fortunate who walks the true path, who is "innocent and upright, fearing God and shunning evil" (Job 1:1). Amen!

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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