**Brooklyn torah gazette**

**For parshas shoftim 5783**

Volume 7, Issue 48 (Whole Number 355) 2 Elul 5783/ Aug. 19, 2023

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

For a free subscription, please forward your request to [***keren18@juno.com***](mailto:keren18@juno.com)

**Rabbi Tovia Singer’s Life**

**Mission to Rescue Jews**

**Ensnared by Christian Missionaries**

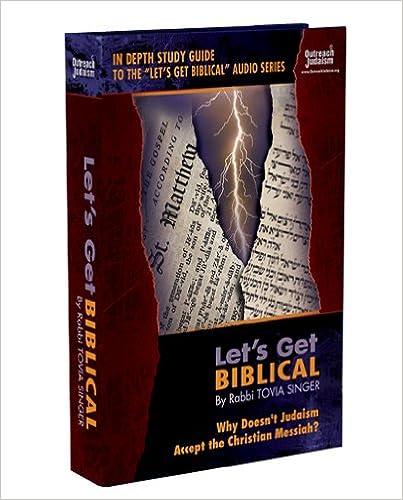
**By Daniel Keren**



Rabbi Tovia Singer, an Orthodox Jew and founder and director of Outreach Judaism who has devoted his life from the age of 16 back in 1976 to trying to rescue hundreds of thousands of assimilated Jews who have been enticed into Christian churches was recently interviewed by Yaakov Langer, host of the Living L’Chaim podcast – Inspiration for the Nation.

Raised in Brooklyn where he learned in the Mirrer Yeshiva, Rabbi Singer has appeared on radio programs including his own with Israel’s Arutz Sheva to explain how Christianity in the New Testament has purposely mistranslated the Tanach (the Jewish Bible) in order to erroneously find contrived connections to Jesus, the source of their man-made religion.

Until about fifty years ago, for almost 2,000 years Christians were frustrated by their inability to convert large number of Jews to their faith, despite the fact that the man Christians worship was himself born a Jew. They realized that most Jews, even ignorant Jews who had not studied their Torah heritage were reluctant to abandon their faith for a religion that had brutally persecuted Jews for almost two millennium. So, the Christians came up with a new tact – promoting a Jews for Jesus movement that tried to make the unwary Jew believe that he was just becoming a more complete Jew.



It was at the age of 16 that Tovia Singer coming out of Moshe Peking with his parents, a then popular kosher Chinese restaurant in Manhattan saw three Jews for Jesus posting notices of an event by and he confronted them. While he wasn’t able to save them, it inspired him to study Tanach and also the Christian New Testament. The result is that not only has he brought back thousands of Jewish men and women to their Jewish heritage, which they had not been given the opportunity to learn; but he also became the source for many Christians who as a result of listening to his radio programs and later podcasts on YouTube and the internet began to realize the serious fallacies of Christianity. He is the author of “Let’s Get Biblical: Why Doesn’t Judaism Accept the Christian Messiah?” that has influenced both Jews caught in missionary schemes and Christians who have been themselves shocked to discover the theological fallacies of their faith in the supposed son of god.

**Thousands Have Been Inspired to Convert to Judaism**

Interestingly today, even though Rabbi Singer’s main goal is to still save Jews from the clutches of Christian missionaries, his radio interviews and podcast have inspired thousands of gentiles to abandon their faith and convert to Judaism.

Many tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands more have opted for the more-easier step of becoming Bnei Noachides, gentiles who have committed themselves to accepting the Seven mitzvahs or commandment that G-d wants all non-Jews to observed. The Torah Sages guarantee that such a non-Jew who faithfully keeps the Bnei Noachide commandments will also be guaranteed a place in heaven or the World-to-Come.

In his interview on the Living L’Chaim podcast – “One Jew is Outsmarting Missionaries at Their Own Game,” Rabbi Singer revealed that the vast majority of his listeners today are not the Jews he is committed to bringing back from Jews from Jesus and other Christian churches, but rather non-Jews who have heard of his attacks on the New Testament’s attacks and purposely misquoting of the Jewish Bible.

**Many Muslims Listen to Rabbi Singer’s Programs**

Another interesting point that Rabbi Singer told Yaakov Langer was that he is getting emails from many many Muslims who have listened to his programs and interviews and have become sincerely interested in learning more details about G-d’s purpose for non-Jews who commit themselves to the Bnei Noachide commandments.

To listen to the entire 1 hour and 12-minute podcast with Living L’Chaim, google “One Jew is Outsmarting Missionaries at Their Own Game” or the YouTube code <https://youtu.be/YydqL_UooCc>

In a related not, this reviewer has heard similarly from other popular mainstream Jewish podcasters that with the advent of the internet, they too have large audiences tuning into their programs about Judaism. Many have contacted the podcasters with inquiries about becoming Jewish or for more details about the fast- growing Bnei Noachide movement.

Rabbi Lazer Brody has estimated that 40% of his audience is comprised on non-Jews. And Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi has also noted the large number of email inquiries he has gotten from non-Jews who have had their faith in both gentile religions and atheism challenged by his pro-Torah programming. Apparently Torahanytime.com, aish.com, Chabad.org and other similar websites hoping to reach out to Jews in need of spiritual chizuk are also being viewed by growing numbers of non-Jews who as a result have become potential geirim (converts) to Judaism or committed Bnei Noachides.

*Reprinted from the August 11, 2023 edition of The Jewish Connection.*

**The Eternal Concept of the**

**Jewish “Cities of Refuge”**

**From the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



This week's Torah portion, Shoftim, speaks about the cities of refuge whence a person would flee if he accidentally killed someone. There, the unintentional killer would dwell, protected from the wrath of the victim's relatives, until the High Priest who served in the Holy Temple passed away.

But not only unintentional killers sought refuge in these cities; even someone who committed murder intentionally was expected to flee there as well. The court would then convene and issue its ruling on the death. The cities of refuge offered protection, if only temporarily in some cases, to anyone who had caused a loss of life.

**Ceasing to Exist in the Physical Sense**

After the destruction of the Holy Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people, the cities of refuge ceased to exist in the physical sense. Yet the Torah is eternal, and its lessons apply in every generation. In our times, therefore, the concept of cities of refuge finds expression in the spiritual dimension.

Our Sages taught that "the words of Torah absorb." In other words, the Torah itself is the refuge in which all may seek asylum. In the spiritual sense, "killing" symbolizes the act of committing a sin, causing a spiritual death to the G-dly soul, for the Torah's 613 mitzvot are the "ropes" that bind the soul to G-d. Transgressing the Torah's commandments damages those ties, and threatens to cut the soul off from its G-dly source.

We learn from this week's Torah portion that it is never too late to do teshuva, to repent, no matter how grave a transgression has been committed. Even the person who deliberately sinned can do teshuva and seek protection in the refuge of Torah.

**Today, Teshuva Alone Can**

**Atone for Even the Gravest Sin**

In one sense, nowadays we have a distinct advantage over our forefathers who lived during the times of the Holy Temple. In those days, repentance alone was not enough to atone for a sin. The unintentional killer had to remain exiled in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest, and the intentional murderer (as defined by the Torah) received capital punishment. Yet after the destruction of the Temple, teshuva alone can atone for even the gravest sin.

Years ago, when Jewish courts had ultimate authority, a judge could only rule on what he himself had seen. G-d, however, can look into the heart of man and judge whether or not his repentance is sincere.

In the same way, the month of Elul, during which we take account of our actions of the previous year, is a "city of refuge" in time, offering us the same opportunity to clear the slate and merit a good and sweet year to come.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Shoftim 5760/2000 edition of L’Chaim. (Adapted from works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.)*

**The Beauty of an**

**Understated Lifestyle**

**By Naftali Weinberger**



R’ Aharon Leib Shteinman explained that the key to bracha is to live an understated lifestyle without calling attention to oneself. This applies to the way one dresses, celebrates simchos, builds and furnishes a house, enjoys the nachas of one’s family, or deals with any form of good fortune. Ostentatious behavior begs to be noticed and naturally leads to comparison, which, in turn, may result in feelings of dejection, inadequacy, and jealousy in less fortunate individuals.

This emotional pain – which arguably falls into the category of “bein adam la’chaveiro” – may cause harm to the one who flaunted his fortune. It causes the object of jealousy to come under closer Heavenly scrutiny, and this can lead to misfortune. (Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Reb Aharon Leib”)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Re’eh email of The Weekly Vort.*

**Rav Avigdor Miller on How**

**Can an Evil Man Use His**

**Final Illness to Save His Soul**

****

**QUESTION:** When a rasha is dying and suffering, is that an atonement for him so that he should suffer less in the Next World?

**ANSWER:** It could be. If he would utilize the opportunity to do some teshuvah, then of course it would be a kaparah for him. But if he remains an atheist then nothing will help. He could be suffering the worst forms of torture but if he has no G-d then there is no atonement for him at all. There’s no such thing as atonement for a person who doesn’t believe in Hashem.

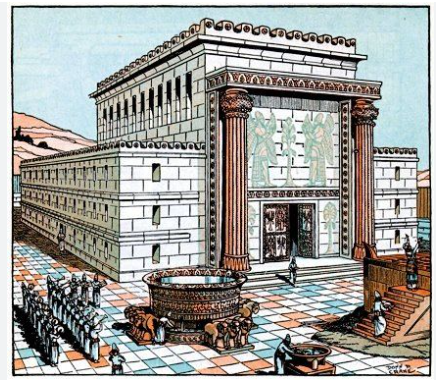
Now, if somebody would come to the hospital and teach him emunah, teach him about Hakadosh Baruch Hu, then he can utilize his last moments. But without that ingredient, without Hashem, there’s no such thing as teshuvah. Teshuvah means to come back to Hashem, not to come back to morality. It’s not enough to come back to decency; that’s not teshuvah – you have to come back to Hashem otherwise it’s worthless. And don’t let anybody tell you anything different because it’s sheker v’chazav; it’s totally false.

That’s why the greatest of all errors is to forget about Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That’s the sin of all sins. And therefore, the biggest benefit you can do to people is to teach them emunah. Emunah is the ingredient that makes a man’s life worth living, and it even makes his suffering worth enduring. Because he can utilize his suffering and accomplish coming back to Hashem. That’s the success of yissurim, of suffering. But just to suffer and remain an atheist, that’s nothing at all. If he doesn’t say, “I’ve sinned before You Hashem. I’ve been a wicked man and I’ve committed many abominations. Please forgive me,” then his suffering is nothing. It’s just the beginning of the real suffering that’s waiting for him in Gehenom.

*Excerpted from a Parshas Re’eh 5783 email of Toras Avigdor based on Rabbi Avigdor Miller’s Tape #606 from his classic Thursday night lectures.*

**Was King David Wrong for Waging So Many Battles?**

**By Rabbi** [**Moshe Goldman**](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/12764/jewish/Goldman-Moshe.htm)



***Question:*** I've heard it said that King David was denied the opportunity to build the Holy Temple because he had "blood on his hands" from the many wars he waged. If this is the case, why do we hold David in such high esteem? Why was he chosen to be the progenitor of the Moshiach?

***Answer:*** You are correct. King David told his son Solomon:

*"But the word of G‑d was upon me, saying: 'You have shed much blood, and you have waged great wars; you shall not build a house in My Name because you have shed much blood to the ground before Me. Behold a son will be born to you. He will be a man of peace, and I shall give him peace from all his enemies around about . . . He shall build a House in My Name."*[1](javascript:doFootnote('1a625408');)

We always need to concern ourselves with one question only: "What does [G‑d](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/433240/jewish/God.htm) want from me right here, right now?" For David, the answer was to go to war to protect his nation against the various military threats that they faced. The fact that later on he was not allowed to build the Temple is no indication that his warfare was a black mark on his record. It was simply incompatible with the peaceful nature of the Temple.

A simple analogy: You are walking to a black-tie dinner, and you pass by a muddy swamp. You notice someone sinking in the mucky water, screaming for help, so you jump in and save him. The guy you rescued thanks you profusely and goes on his way—but you won't really feel comfortable continuing on to the black-tie dinner in your muddy, dripping suit. Chances are that security will escort you out if you do decide to make an appearance.

So, does that mean that you now regret saving the drowning man?

Hope this helps.

**FOOTNOTES**

[1.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/625408/jewish/Was-King-David-wrong-for-waging-so-many-battles.htm" \l "footnoteRef1a625408) [I Chronicles 22:8](https://www.chabad.org/16542#v8)-10.

*Reprinted from the archives of the website of Chabad.Org*

**Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your gates (Deut. 16:18)**

The only way to ensure that a judge will be completely impartial and render his verdicts fairly is to choose one who will not refrain from judging the person who appointed him. Following this advice safeguards against corruption. (Kli Yakar)

*Justice, justice shall you pursue* (Deut. 16:20)

Not only must righteousness be actively pursued, but the path to achieving it must also be virtuous and honorable. This is in contradiction to the commonly held notion that "the end justifies the means." (Reb Bunim)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Shoftim 5760/2000 edition of L’Chaim.*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Shoftim 5783**



This week’s parsha emphasizes, albeit in an indirect fashion, the litigious nature of human society and the requirement for the appointment of judges to decide disputes and for police to enforce those decisions. A perfect world needs no judges or courts, police or bailiffs. Our very imperfect world cannot reasonably hope to function and exist in their absence.

Law and order are the requirements for a commercially and civilly successful society. As such, judges and courts are the necessary check to prevent chaos and anarchy, But the Torah points out that there must always be necessary restraint on the powers of the courts and the police as well. And that check to judicial power is called justice and righteousness, as these concepts are defined and detailed by the Torah law and its traditions.

There is a special burden imposed by the Torah upon the judicial process, to somehow achieve not simply legally correct decisions, but a broader obligation to accomplish a sense of righteousness and justice in its general society. And the courts are bidden to be pursuers of justice and righteousness and not to satisfy themselves with seemingly correct legal conclusions, which narrowly construed, unfortunately can many times somehow lead to injustice and tragedy.

There are many examples in the history of the Jewish people where judicial and even rabbinic decisions, seemingly legally correct, led to terrible disputes and tragedies simply because the general public did not feel that justice was done in the matter. Without the palpable presence of justice being present in our court system, we become a very divisive and spiritually sterile society.

Jewish tradition encourages compromise over hard and fast judicial decision. In fact, many great Jewish figures of the past and present, though personally involved in the world and practice of commerce, have prided themselves as never having been involved in any dispute that was submitted to a court of law or to a rabbinic tribunal. The emotional and monetary costs of pursuing a matter of contention in a judicial manner are telling and long lasting. This is especially true when a family or partnership dispute is involved. Those scars are never completely healed. When I attended law school many decades ago, we were taught to abide by an adage attributed to Abraham Lincoln: “A poor settlement is still better than a good lawsuit.”

Disputes disturb our sense of ego, and we feel that we must prevail, sometimes at enormous personal cost. We become captivated by the sense of our legal rights and lose sight that justice, righteousness and inner harmony can be better served by realizing that less is more and that legal victories are many times more pyrrhic than real. The prophet Yeshayahu calls to those that “pursue righteousness and justice” for they are the ones who truly seek “to find G-dliness in their lives.” We need judges, courts and police in all human societies. Nevertheless, the wise person will regard them as matters of last resort and not as the prime solution to the frictions and problems of everyday life.

Shabat shalom

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**

*You shall be perfect with the L-rd your G-d* (Deut. 18:13)

Our morning prayers are prefaced by the following line: "It is proper to say before prayer: I hereby take upon myself to fulfill the mitzva, ‘Love your fellowman as yourself.' "

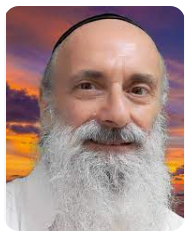
When a Jew prays, he is symbolically offering his soul before G-d. In the same way that a physical sacrifice had to be whole and unblemished, so too must a Jew be without defect before approaching his Maker. The Jewish people are considered to be a single body; if a Jew does not properly love one of the "limbs," the entire body is affected and becomes flawed. It is therefore appropriate to accept the commandment to love our fellow Jews before prayer to ensure that the "sacrifice" we offer is perfect and whole. (Ohr HaTorah of the Tzemach Tzedek)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Shoftim 5760/2000 edition of L’Chaim.*

**Elul: Finding Our Way**

**By Rabbi Shalom Arush**

**Translated by Rabbi Lazer Brody**

****

**Rabbi Shalom Arush and Rabbi Lazer Brody**

Elul is the month of teshuva. Most people think that “teshuva” means penitence, but that’s not really accurate. Teshuva means “to return”, from the Hebrew word lashuv. So where are we trying to return to? To Hashem, of course. But, so many people are lost – they don’t know the way. Our job in Elul is to find our way back to Hashem. For that, we must learn spiritual navigation.

*There’s a basic law in navigation – you can’t know where you’re going until you know where you are. Most people have no idea where they are – they’re lost in this world. That’s why they lack direction and waste their lives doing inconsequential things.*

**The Need to Know Where You Are and Where You Want to Go**

Let’s suppose that you do have a goal, that you do know where you want to go. If you don’t know where you are now, how can you know how to get there. For example, suppose you want to go to Chicago, but you have no idea where you are now. If you’re in Los Angeles, then you have to travel eastward to get to Chicago. And if you’re in New York City, then you must travel westward to get there. So, what happens if you don’t know where you are? You don’t know where to go!

Hashem calls each one of us every single day – Ayeka, where are you? The same laws in physical navigation also apply to spiritual navigation. We can’t know where we’re going if we don’t know where we are. We can’t get close to Hashem if we don’t take an objective look at ourselves and know exactly where we’re holding.

A person can’t simply say, “I know how to get to Hashem – I simply go up!” He won’t get closer to Hashem unless he first does what he needs to do at his current spiritual level. A person can’t wake up in the morning and decide that he’s Moses or Rebbe Akiva – it doesn’t work that way. Our ascent must be level by level, correcting and refining ourselves every step of the way.

Just as a child can’t jump from the second grade of elementary school to Harvard Medical School, we’d be fantasying to think that we can pole-vault our way over spiritual steps to reach great heights. People who think that end up falling just like the pole vaulter – he doesn’t stay up high, because that’s not true ascent.

**The Evil Inclination’s Quicksand Trap**

Let’s look where we really are now. We’re influenced by a generation that’s hit rock bottom. Every single day, you hear stories about how the web, social media, and chat rooms have brought out the ugliest of people. Who ever heard of such blatant cyber adultery, pedophiles, and other such filth? It breaks one’s heart to think that so many “observant” people squander hours in such spiritual mires, which is non other than the Evil Inclination’s quicksand that traps and buries a person alive. Everything revolves around lust and breach of holiness.

You can’t understand the rewards of guarding one’s personal holiness, especially in a generation where even rabbis fail to guard their eyes. That’s what it means to know where you are. Be honest with yourself and be honest with Hashem. Talk to Him like this: “OK, Hashem, I admit that my mind is full of lewd images and thoughts. I often forget to close my eyes and I end up seeing sights that destroy my soul, rob me of my personal holiness, and are therefore hateful to You.

**Needing the Help of Our Father in Heaven**

“But, I want to be a shomer brit, Hashem; I want to be a guardian of personal holiness. I want to be able to get close to you. I want to be able to taste the true delight of Torah, of Shabbat, and of holiness. I’m sick of being a slave to my lusts and bodily urges. You have to help me, Hashem! You’re my Father in Heaven; I need Your help because I can’t do this on my own.”

You can’t imagine the immense gratification Hashem receives from a person who speaks to Hashem after candid self-evaluation. We shouldn’t budge from this type of daily personal prayer until every aspect of personal holiness is deeply ingrained within our hearts and minds. The important thing to know is where we’re truly holding. And, in all ethical honesty, we can only seek Hashem’s help in enhancing our personal holiness if we’re doing everything in our power to guard and preserve our personal holiness.

There’s an important point which is the beginning of every success, the best way to connect to Hashem. This is the foundation of one’s entire relationship with Hashem. Let me explain:

**The Folly of Trying to Hide from Hashem**

Parshat Bereishit explains that Adam and Eve transgressed Hashem’s commandment by eating from the Tree of Wisdom. The Torah then tells that after eating the forbidden fruit, they realized how terrible their transgression was. So, what did they do? Inanely, they tried to hide from Hashem. Stop and think about this – isn’t it chutzpah? That’s really insolent, trying to hide from Hashem, Who is everywhere, all the time, omniscient and sees everything. Hashem also never forgets the tiniest detail of whatever happens anywhere. How can you hide from Hashem? Adam and Eve did.

Just imagine that your boys are playing hardball, and they knock the ball right through your $1,500 living-room window. Then they try to hide from you; that makes you even more furious. But, if your boys are good boys, and they admit their mistake, willing to pay for the damage by doing chores and paying with their allowance money and birthday money, your heart fills with mercy for them. They know they did wrong and they’re willing to rectify. What wonderful boys. You don’t punish such children; indeed, you love them even more.

**Better to Suffer a Few Moments of Embarrassment**

Just imagine the grief that Adam and Eve would have spared both themselves and subsequent generations if they would have approached Hashem and admitted their mistake rather than trying to hide. So, you sinned? Suffer a few moments of embarrassment and confess to Hashem! The embarrassment in itself is an atonement for the sin. But to try and hide from Hashem? That’s super chutzpah, outright insolence. Don’t you think that Hashem sees everything and knows everything? How can anyone hide from Hashem?

Yet, we’re not talking about Adam and Eve – we’re talking about us, here 5778 years down the road. People hide behind their office door and text message to people they shouldn’t be texting. Or people think they’re alone at home and start gabbing in chat rooms, or Facebook, or even worse. Don’t you know that Hashem sees and hears your every thought, not only your every word. Thinking that you can hide from Hashem, or that Hashem doesn’t see you, is the biggest heresy and insolence on earth.

So how can a so-called religious person do the horrible things that we’ve been hearing about, completely trampling personal holiness? Their lust blinds them to the point where they can no longer see Hashem. When a person cuts himself off from personal holiness, he cuts himself off from Hashem, G-d forbid.

Hashem is still patient. He is still calling out daily to every one of us, “Ayeka, where are you?” Ayeka, when we take a good look at ourselves and ask ourselves where we are, this is the important point which we spoke about, the beginning of every success, and the best way to connect to Hashem. Ayeka, honestly assessing ourselves and knowing truly where we’re holding is the foundation of one’s entire relationship with Hashem. May we all succeed, amen.

*Reprinted from the July 8, 2023 website of Breslev Magazine.*