

Attack On The Soul

"Hey Reuven, do you want to come with us?"

"Where are you guys going?"

"To the movie theater."

"No thank you."

"Why not?"

"That's no place for a nice boy. They show all kinds of things on the movie screen which can poison your mind and soul."

"Wow, those are pretty strong words. What are you worried about? Nobody is out to get you. You just pay your money, go in, and sit down. Nobody bothers you."

"Maybe nobody hurts your body, but they make a terrorist attack on your soul."

"Harass the Midianim and smite them" (Bamidbar 25:17). Why? The Midianim sought to destroy us by making us sin. They tricked us into worshipping their idol, *Baal Peor*. This caused Hashem's anger to flare up against Israel. And so, we had to punish the Midianim.

The Medrash adds a fascinating insight. Someone who causes a person to sin is worse than one who kills him. The killer can only remove him from this world. However, he still has his portion in the next world. The one who makes him sin, removes him from both worlds. This world is temporary. The next world is forever.

Kinderlach . . .

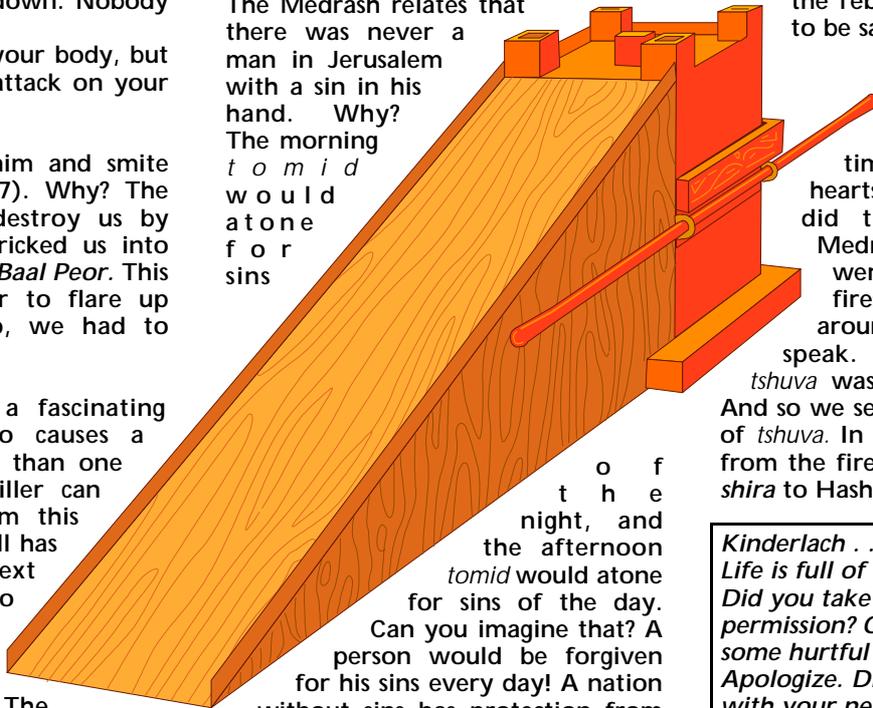
So many forces are out to get out souls. The technology is almost irresistible. Every new electronic gadget is a big distraction. How can you think about Hashem when the screen beckons? The newspapers, advertisements, billboards, are all experts at taking you out of reality. Let your eyes see Seforim Kedoshim (Holy Books). Let your ears hear words of Torah and Tefillah. Let your soul live.

What We Are Missing

Last week marked the fast of the 17th of Tammuz, the beginning of a three-week period of mourning over the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

We know that we are supposed to feel a loss at this time. However, it may be difficult. We never saw the Beis HaMikdash, its glory, pageantry, the open miracles, and the *shechina* (Divine Presence) that rested there. How then, can we mourn? The more that we know about the Beis HaMikdash, the more acutely we can feel its loss.

"One lamb you shall do (offer up) in the morning . . ." (Bamidbar 28:4). This was the first of two *Korbonos Tomid* (Perpetual Offerings), offered up every day in the Beis HaMikdash. The Medrash relates that there was never a man in Jerusalem with a sin in his hand. Why? The morning *t o m i d* would atone for sins



o f t h e night, and the afternoon *tomid* would atone for sins of the day. Can you imagine that? A person would be forgiven for his sins every day! A nation without sins has protection from its enemies. A nation without sins has untold blessings. As Rabbeinu Bechaye relates, The world was upheld and sustained by the *Korbon Tomid*, and its food supply was blessed. The blessing began from the Holy of Holies and spread to the whole world. The Medrash continues, "In this world you offer *Lechem HaPanim* (Show Bread) and *korbonos*. In the next world, I will set before you a magnificent table. The idol worshippers will see it and be embarrassed."

Kinderlach . . .

Now we have some concept of what we are missing. Blessings, security, forgiveness, these all were a part of the life that centered on the Beis HaMikdash. Don't just observe the customs of mourning these three

weeks without any feeling. "Rachmana lieba boy" (The Torah requires heart). Put your heart into it. Feel the sadness of two thousand years without the shechina. Feel the loss of the blessings. And look forward to its rebuilding speedily in our days. Amen.

Tshuva

"And the sons of Korach did not die" (Bamidbar 26:11). Why not? They were part of a rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu, the Godol HaDor. The pit of *gehennom* opened to swallow up the rebels. Why did they merit to be saved in a high place?

Rashi answers that they did *tshuva* (repentance). At the time of the rebellion, their hearts stirred with *tshuva*. Why did they not confess? The Medrash explains that they were terrified. They saw the fires of *gehennom* burning all around them. They could not speak. Yet, just a thought of *tshuva* was enough to save them. And so we see the tremendous power of *tshuva*. In one moment, they went from the fires of *gehennom* to singing *shira* to Hashem (Tehillim 44-49).

Kinderlach . . .

Life is full of opportunities for tshuva. Did you take someone's book without permission? Give it back. Did you say some hurtful words to your sister? Apologize. Did you have an argument with your neighbor? Make peace. Did you pray without any kavannah (concentration)? Next time pray with kavannah. Tshuva is not limited to Yom Kippur. It is not only a mitzvah for tsaddikim. Anyone can do tshuva at any time. Don't miss the opportunity.

Parasha Questions:

- Did Hashem command Moshe to destroy Moav? Why? (Rashi 25:18)
- Which tribe had the most men over 20? (26:1-51)
- For what sin did Tselofchod die? (Rashi 27:3)
- How many *nesachim* accompanied a bull, ram, sheep? (28:14)
- On Succos – what was the total number of bulls? Sheep? What did they represent? (29:13-34 and Rashi 29:18).