

# DATA of Plano

Parshas Balak | 17 Tamuz 5778 | June 30, 2018

## Sermon



## JEWES FOR ETERNITY

### Friday

Mincha: 7:00

Candle lighting: 8:21 (Earliest time: 7:11)

### Shabbos Day

Shacharis: 9:00

Latest time for shema: 9:56

Learners' Service: 10:30

Childcare: 10:45

Kiddush following services at 11:45

Mincha: 8:00

Shabbos ends: 9:25

## Learners' Service



## LESSONS FROM MY CHIROPRACTOR

### From the Desk of Rabbi Yogi

## Instant Gratification (Part 1)



I think we can all relate to the challenge of overcoming the lure of instant gratification. Whether it's the magnetic pull of the glazed doughnut to the dieter, the couch to the procrastinator, or the vice to the seduced, exercising self control is one of, if not the greatest, challenges of life. And generally, we stink at it!

The findings coming out of the new and burgeoning field of behavioral economics helps to explain this troublesome human paradigm. Humans,

they argue, have present-biased preferences which make self control difficult. Shahram Heshmat ("Behavioral Economics of Self control Failure" in Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, Sep. 2015) explains the concept as follows:

... behavioral economics shows that individuals discount (devalue) too strongly future rewards and overemphasize near-term pleasures. When we can hold all alternatives at a distance, our evaluations of

them remain true to their values in our lives. But our subjective evaluation of a reward (our appetite for it) grows when we are closer to the reward than when we are far away, and unless we somehow commit ourselves to our previous preferences, we succumb.

This inconsistency rests on an illusion that we all experience every day. For example, imagine you set your alarm clock at midnight to wake up at 6:00 AM the next morning. But when the alarm goes off, the choice that you made last night now “seems absurd.” The warmth and comfort of the bed makes you change your mind. What was chosen the night before is now rejected.

In other words, when faced with the potential felicity of immediate gratification our usually trusty decision making skills and rational thinking go out the window. And in just a matter of seconds, we transition from rational

actors to irrational actors. It’s no wonder why humans struggle so mightily with the forces of procrastination, overeating and addiction!

To address this problem, researchers in the social sciences suggest meeting the allure of instant gratification with another immediate pleasure or pain that encourages self control. My father, an avid student of behavioral economics, established a rule for himself prohibiting the listening of his beloved podcasts except at the gym, while working out. Suddenly, relaxing on the couch didn’t look as appealing!

Behavioral investigator Vanessa Van Edwards details a pain-centric approach called Anti-Charity in

which you strengthen your resolutions and quiet the voices of mutiny in your head with a commitment to give a certain amount of money to a charity you abhor every time you break with your commitment. Will I smoke that cigarette if it costs me a five dollar donation to the Klu Klux Klan? ... I didn’t think so! As crazy as it sounds, the immediate, painful realization that smoking one cigarette means supporting a horrible institution with a minimal donation resonates more in the mind than the long term consideration that smoking will eventually kill you!

Speaking from personal experience, I can testify to the power of the Anti-Charity strategy. Although, it should be noted that because of the halachic issues involved in potentially donating to a damaging

and sinful organization (like the KKK), my commitment involved the second best thing - a donation to a particularly disdainful political figure (the donation itself not a sin, but it felt pretty bad nonetheless!).



The religious life introduces loads of new arenas requiring self control. What we eat, how we work, when we work, how we speak, what we look at, how we judge, how we react, what we wear and on and on and on. I was curious in light of the findings which demonstrate humanity’s trouble with properly evaluating near-term pleasures what the Torah’s advice for overcoming temptation might be and if it addresses the the central issues described by behavioral economics.

What I found in my investigation was initially disappointing, yet ultimately spiritually edifying and every-day pragmatic. Make sure to look out for my next article where I will reveal my findings.



# REMINDER

The Shabbat childcare teachers are away for the summer. Those that wish to volunteer for childcare so that it can be offered throughout the summer are encouraged to contact Aimee Wortendyke at [awortendyke@gmail.com](mailto:awortendyke@gmail.com).



Kiddush is sponsored by the Gurman family in honor of the recent and upcoming birthdays of Rita, Alex, Avital, Tamar, and Nataniela

## Fast of the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz (This year on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz)

Fast Begins.....4:52 am

If you plan on eating in the morning before the fast begins, you should verbally stipulate as such before going to sleep the night before.

Shacharis.....8:00 am

Mincha.....8:25 pm

Fast ends.....9:24 pm

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tamuz, we enter the period of the "Three Weeks" which culminates with the fast of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, on which day both temples were destroyed.

### During the Three Weeks:

- No weddings are held
- We do not listen to music
- We avoid public celebrations
- We do not cut our hair or shave. (If one needs to shave for business, etc., the rabbi should be consulted.)

Thursday evening, July 12<sup>th</sup> is Rosh Chodesh Av, beginning a more intense period of mourning known as the "Nine Days".

### During that time period:

- We do not eat meat or drink wine except on Shabbat
- We do not swim
- We do not bathe or shower for pleasure
- We do not do laundry or wear freshly laundered clothes.

# SAVE THE DATE!

- ☑ Fast of the Ninth of Av | Sunday, July 22
- ☑ Champions Camp | August 5 - August 10
- ☑ Jewish Night at the RoughRiders | Sunday, August 5 @ 7:05 P.M.
- ☑ Community End of Summer BBQ | Sunday, August 19





# Champion's Mini-Camp

**BOATING // DAY TRIPS // OVERNIGHT  
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES // WORKSHOP**

AGES 9-11 CHALUTZIM DIVISION // ALUFIM DIVISION AGES 12-14

**\$225 PER CHILD** SCHOLARSHIPS  
AVAILABLE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT RABBI ELI NISSEL AT  
ENISSEL@DATAOFPLANO.ORG OR 970.402.2281

August  
5-10

