



There is an expression, "Idle hands are the devil's playground." Many problems occur due to boredom. Indeed, the Mishna (Kesubos 59b) states "*Batala ma'via lidei shi'omum*", idleness leads to mental instability (see also Avos 3:4). The Rambam writes "*Sh'ein machsheves arayos misgaberes elah b'lev panui min hachachma*," thoughts of *arayos* dominate in a heart that is empty of wisdom (Hilchos Isurei Biah 22:21).

In the time of Noach, the *machareisha* (plough) was invented (Bereishis 5:29). This saved them a lot of time. We would think that they would dedicate the time they now saved to *avodas Hashem*. However, this was not the case as they caused destruction to the world until the *mabul* eventually came. We see a similar pattern nowadays. There is much technology that saves us time, affording us the opportunity to devote these extra moments to the service of Hashem. Sadly, these opportunities are not always utilised (also see Kesubos 59a).

The Mishna (Avos 2:2) states "*Yafeh Talmud Torah im derech erez she'yegias shnaihem mashkachas avon*", Torah study is good together with an occupation for the exertion of them both makes sin forgotten. This is because if our day is filled, idleness that leads to sin is avoided. Concerning the many cases of mental illnesses today that require psychiatric help, an elderly man once commented that when he was younger, "We were too busy making a living to be crazy!" It has been said, "No thoroughly occupied man was ever known to be miserable."

Rashi tells us that letters that are enunciated from the same area of the mouth are interchangeable. Since the letters *sin* and *tzadi* are both pronounced from the teeth, the words *sameach* (happy) and *tzameach* (to grow) are related. R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains that one is happy when he is growing. Incidentally, there is a saying, "Everyone wants to live on top of the mountain but all the happiness and growth occurs while you are climbing it."

The Kotzker Rebbe told his chassidim that their sins didn't bother him as much as that they had time to sin. He would say, "I don't expect my chassidim to have the fortitude not to sin. I expect them not to have time to sin." One should be so busy with good deeds that there is no time for sin. One who is busy learning Torah, davening, performing acts of kindness and the like doesn't have time to sin.

We say in *kiddush* on Shabbos day "*V'yom hashvii Shabbos l'Hashem Elokecha*", the seventh day is Shabbos to Hashem (Shemos 20:10). Shabbos is a day when we can't do any type of work. With all this extra time there may be cause for concern in time being wasted. For this reason, the *pasuk* tells us we should make special use of this time by dedicating it to Hashem (this may be done through *Oneg Shabbos*, singing *zemiros*, Torah and the like), and as we say "*Shabbos hayom l'Hashem*" (Shemos 16:25 and Shabbos *zemiros*). This is how we can interpret "*V'yom hashvii Shabbos l'Hashem Elokecha*", we should dedicate the seventh day

to Hashem. Similarly, "*Shamor es yom ha'Shabbos*" (Devarim 5:12, see Sforno there), we should safeguard Shabbos, "*L'kadsho*" – in order that we don't waste it. We are commanded to do our work in six days but not on Shabbos (Shemos 20:9-10). R' Bachaye says in the name of the Rambam: We serve Hashem during the six days of the week. How? Through work. But on Shabbos we serve Hashem through *menucha*, rest, and abstaining from work.

We are told that when Yaakov worked seven years for Rachel it seemed to him as a few days (Bereishis 29:20). This seems contrary to nature since when one loves someone, every moment feels like an eternity. The Mishna (Avos 2:15) teaches that the day is short and the task is great. Another interpretation: the day seems very short when one has a lot to do. Since Yaakov was busy working, it seemed to him only as a few days because when one is busy, time flies.

Likewise, when dating, it may seem, the process takes forever. However, if the dating period is spent preparing for marriage, the dating process goes quicker. This is another reason that it seemed to Yaakov as a few days – it went very quickly – as he was busy preparing for marriage.

We should always make an effort to maximise our time. Let's remember the saying, "Today will never happen again but one good deed will make it last forever."

The *pasuk* "*Lo tov heyos ha'adam lvado*" (Bereishis 2:18) can be interpreted as it is not good for man to be alone – to be doing nothing. So, "*E'eseh lo eizer k'negdo*" – we need to create things against this such as having a job, friendships, learning Torah, and so on. This applies all the time but especially in times when we are vulnerable to falter in this area such as *bein hazmanim* and the like. Advice to counter this is offered in the words "*Yadayim askaniyos heim*" (Shabbos 14a, see Bereishis 32:15, Rashi), to be busy.

When Yosef was thrown into the pit, it says "*V'habor reik ein bo mayim*", the pit was empty, there was no water in it (Bereishis 37:24). Rashi, quoting the Gemara, tells us "*Avul nechashim v'akravim yesh bo*", there was no water but there were snakes and scorpions (Shabbos 22a). In fact, the Gra informs us *ein bo* forms an acronym for *avul nechashim v'akravim yesh bo*. Observing an abandoned building, we notice it is filled with snakes, mice, bugs, insects and so on. This is in contrast to a building that is in use (see Mishlei 24:30-31). The Gemara (Baba Kama 82a) relates water refers to Torah. Now, we can grasp this in another way: "*Ein bo mayim*" – when there is no Torah, one gets filled up with snakes and scorpions, referring to bad traits (Peninim Mishulchan Hagra, Vayeshev, 37:24). Additionally, if we rearrange the words *ein bo*, we can spell out *ba Yavan*, Yavan comes, since if there is no *kedusha*, the vacuum is filled with *tumah*. Let us all merit to be full with the waters of Torah.

RABBI YEHOSHUA ALT

The newly released book "*Exhilarating Torah Insights on Recreation and Vacation*" is now available (as a paperback, hardcover and digitized version) for purchase and delivery on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DF4ZHPKJ> or by sending a WhatsApp to +972 54 849 5217. Alternatively, you can call 054 849 5217 (Israel) or 917 732 2371 (United States) or send an email to yalt3285@gmail.com.

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