

# 4G ZERIZUS



## THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN AVODAS HASHEM

The Washington Post discusses the idea of procrastination in people, and how prevalent it is in our society.

### The Washington Post

#### Why do we procrastinate, and how can we stop?

Joseph Ferrari, a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago and author of “Still Procrastinating?: The No Regrets Guide to Getting It Done,” has found that **about 20 percent of adults are chronic procrastinators. “That’s higher than depression, higher than phobia, higher than panic attacks and alcoholism.** And yet all of those are considered legitimate,” he said. “We try to trivialize this tendency, but it’s not a funny topic.”

Questions to consider:

- Why do you think that people procrastinate so much?
- What areas do you procrastinate in?
- How can we work on not procrastinating?

#### *Zerizus helps us stop making excuses and rationalizing in our avodas Hashem:*

Procrastinating can seem irrational, why would someone put off a task that is important!? The *Mesilas Yeshraim* explains the root cause of our ‘laziness’ in performing *mitzvos*:

מסילת ישרים: זריזות פרק ו'  
והנה אנחנו רואים בעינינו כמה וכמה פעמים שכבר לבו של האדם יודע חובתו ונתאמת אצלו מה שראוי לו להצלת נפשו ומה שחור  
בה עליו מצד בוראו, ואף על פי כן יניחהו, לא מחסרון הכרת החובה ההיא ולא לשום טעם אחר, אלא מפני שכבודות העצלה מת-  
גברת עליו... והרי הוא אומר, אוכל קמעה, או אישן קמעה, או קשה עלי לציאת מביתי, פשטתי את כתנתי, איכבה אלבשנה, חמה  
עזה בעולם, הקרה רבה או הגשמים, וכל שאר האמתלאות והתואנות אשר פי העצלים מלא מהם. ובין כך ובין כך, התורה מונחת,  
והעבודה מבוטלת, והאדם עוזב את בוראו. ואולם אם תשאל את פי העצל, יבוא לך במאמרי רבים ממאמרי החכמים, והמקראות  
מן הכתובים, והטענות מן השכל, אשר כולם יורו לו, לפי דעתו המשובשת, להקל עליו ולהניחו במנוחת עצלותו

We can observe with our own eyes how so often a person comes to understand his duty in this world and grasps the truth of what is required to save his soul and what is his duty towards his Creator, but despite

this, he disregards it. This disregard is not due to insufficient clarity of this duty, nor any other cause but the heaviness of laziness which overcomes him. He thus says: "I will eat a bit", or "I will sleep a little", or "it is difficult for me to leave my house". "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on again?". "It is very hot outside". "It is very cold" or "it is raining" and all the other sorts of excuses and rationalizations that the mouths of lazy people are full of. Either way, in the meantime the Torah is abandoned, the service of G-d is idle, and man abandons his Creator. If you ask the lazy person [to explain his behavior], he will confront you with numerous quotations of the sages, verses from scripture, and logical arguments all of which instruct him, according to his distorted mind, to be lenient with himself, and to leave himself in the tranquility of his laziness.

פרקי אבות ד': ב'

בן עזאי אומר, הוי רץ למצוה קלה כבחמורה, ובורח מן העברה

Ben Azzai said: Be quick in performing a minor commandment as in the case of a major one, and flee from transgression

Question to consider:

- Why is there such an emphasis in Chazal to run and be quick in our mitzovs observance- do you think we must be fast physically? Mentally?

Ethics from Siani:

True strength, said Ben Zoma in the first *mishnah*, lies in prevailing over one's evil inclinations. Ben Azzai (whose name might derive from a Hebrew word meaning strength) develops the theme, by indicating how the *yetzer ha-ra* may indeed be conquered.

This *yetzer* is not merely an inclination. It is a canny tempter and persuader. For when you want to perform a *mitzvah*, who else stands in your way but this evil inclination, arguing, "Do not go, it is raining outside; you are tired after a long day's work. Do not visit the sick; they would rather be alone," and so on. When a *mitzvah* beckons, the *yetzer ha-ra* looms before you as a block, a hindrance, a deterrent. When there is an opportunity to sin, however—a chance to transgress—then the evil tempter takes up a position behind you, pushing you, as it were, adding persuasive impetus to propel you to action. This is why we entreat in our evening prayer, "Remove Satan from before us and from behind us."

And so Ben Azzai advises that when you have an opportunity to do a *mitzvah*, take heed: if you are proceeding at a slow, lethargic saunter, you will never get past the *yetzer ha-ra* in front of you. Run to do the *mitzvah*! Gather speed and enthusiasm, and hurtle through the block; jump the hindrance that the evil one may create. On the other hand, when

שמות ל"ה: כ"ז

והנשאים הביאו את אבני השם ואת אבני המלואים לאפוד ולחשן:

And the Nesiim brought the important and precious stones for the Ephod and Choshen

רש"י:

והנשאים הביאו. אמר ר' נתן: מה ראו נשיאים להתנדב בחנכת המזבח בתחלה ובמלאכת המשכן לא התנדבו בתחלה? אלא כך אמרו נשיאים, 'התנדבו צבור מה שמתנדבין, ומה שמחפדים, אנו משלימין אותו'. בין שהשלימו צבור את הכל - שג' והמלאכה היתה כים - אמרו נשיאים 'מה עלינו לעשות?' "ביאו את אבני השם וגו'", "לכך התנדבו בחנכת המזבח תחלה, ולפי שנתעצלו מתחלה נחסרה אות משמם, "והנשאים" כתיב.

R. Nathan asked, "What reason had the princes to give their contributions at the dedication of the altar first of all the people, whereas at the work of the Tabernacle they were not the first, but the last to contribute?" But the princes spoke saying: "Let the community in general contribute all they with to give and what will then be lacking we shall supply" But when the community gave everything needed in its entirety — as it is said, (Exodus 36:7) "For the stuff they had was enough [for all the work to make it, and some was left]" — the princes asked, "What can we now do?" therefore הביאו That is why they were the first to contribute at the consecration of the altar. Because, however, they were dilatory at the beginning, a letter is missing here from their title (thus intimating that something, viz., zeal was lacking in them): for it is written והנשאים instead of והנשיאים

Questions to consider:

- What justifications do you give yourself when you are being lazy in a certain area?

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פרקי אבות א': י"ד

הוא היה אומר, אם אין אני לי, מי לי. וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני. ואם לא עבשיו, אימתי:

He [also] used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self [only], what am I? And if not now, when?

רבינו יונה:

אם לא עבשיו אימתי. שלא יאמר אני היום עסוק במלאכתי למחר אפנה ואעסוק ואתקן עצמי. כי שמא לא תפנה ואפי' אם יפנה היום ההוא חלף עבר ובטל אותו ממלאכת ה' ולא יוכל לשלמו כל ימיו כי כל הימים אשר הוא חי על האדמה חייב הוא לתקן עצמו ולעסוק במצות ואין לו רשות ליבטל ממלאכתו ואפי' שעה אחת.

Such that he will not say, I will occupy myself with my work today and tomorrow I will turn to and occupy myself with self-improvement. Since maybe he will not turn to [it]. And even if he does turn to [it], that day went, left and he removed it from the work of God. And he will not be able to make it up all the days of his life, since he is obligated to improve himself and to be occupied by the commandment all of the days that he is living upon the [earth], and he does not have the right to avoid this work - not even for a moment.

Consider these three questions:

- Who do you think is the holiest person?
- Where do you think is the holiest place?
- When do you think is the holiest time?

Rav Moshe Weinberger posed these three questions to a young boy who came up with all sorts of answers. For example: the Kohen Gadol, Moshe Rabeinu, Eretz Yisrael, the Beis HaMikdash, Yom Kippur etc. Rav Weinberger then smiled and said "the holiest person is YOU, the holiest place is RIGHT HERE, and the holiest time is RIGHT NOW." He showed this young boy that often we come up with excuses and will procrastinate growing in avodas Hashem because we feel that we are not good enough, or we are not in the right place in life, but we must understand that Hashem wants our Torah and mitzvos in whatever state and stage we are in at this moment, and we therefore cannot delay!

*How can we work to implement zerizus into our life?*

## I: MINDSET

פרקי אבות ב': ט"ו

רבי טרפון אומר, היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה, והפועלים עצלים, והשכר תרבה, ובעל הבית דוחק:

Rabbi Tarfon said: the day is short, and the work is plentiful, and the laborers are indolent, and the reward is great, and the master of the house is insistent.

רבינו יונה:

ר' טרפון אומר היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה. היום קצר אלו ימותיו שהם קצרים כנגד התורה שהיא מרובה ארוכה מארץ מדה ורחבה מני ים ואין יורד לסוף. וזהו שאמרו (שמו"ר מז ז) אותם ארבעים יום שעמד משה רבינו ע"ה בהר סיני לא ישן. משל למלך שאמר לעבדו מדוד והובים מכאן ועד למחר וכל מה שתמדוד יהיה שלך. איך יישן והלא באותה שעה יפסיד כמה וכמה. כך אמר משה אם אישן כמה מרגליות מדברי תורה אפסיד. על אחת כמה וכמה אנו כל ניתן שינה לעינינו ולעפעפינו תנומה:

The day is short - these are [a person's] days, which are short compared to the Torah, as it is greater. 'Its measure is longer than the earth and it is wider than the sea,' and none can reach down to its end. And this is what they said (Shemot Rabbah 47:7) - those forty days that our teacher Moshe, stood at Mount Sinai, he did not sleep. There is a parable [relevant to this, about] a king that said to his servant, "Measure gold coins from now until tomorrow, and everything that you measure will be yours." How

can he sleep, and will he not lose very much at that time? So [too] did Moshe say, "If I sleep, how many pearls of words of Torah will I lose?" All the more so us, that we should not give 'sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids.'

Question to consider:

- How does Rabenu Yona teach us how to view mitzvos?
- How can we work to see mitzvos as 'pearls'?

Imagine there is a bank account that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course? Each of us has such a bank, it's name is time. Every morning, it credits you 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off at a loss, whatever of this you failed to invest to a good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no over draft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no drawing against "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and health. The clock is running. Make the most of today.

## II: TIMING

שמות י"ב: י"ז

ושמרתם את המצות כי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את צבאותיכם מארץ מצרים ושמרתם את היום הזה לדרתיכם חקת עולם:

You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time

רש"י:

ושמרתם את המצות. שלא יבאו לידי המוץ; מכאן אמרו תפח תלמיש בצונן, רבי יאשיהו אומר אל תהי קורא את המצות, אלא את המצוות - בדרך שאין מחמיצין את המצה, כך אין מחמיצין את המצוה, אלא אם באה לידיה, עשה אותה מייד (שם):

So that it shall not reach the stage of becoming leavened; hence the Rabbis said, if it (the dough) is rising (a sign that the leavening process is setting in) she (the woman kneading the dough) polishes it with cold water (i. e. she slaps the dough with hands dipped in cold water). Rabbi Josiah said: Do not read "את המצות", the unleavened bread, but את המצות "[ye shall watch] the commandments" — just as we may not cause the unleavened bread to become leavened by letting the dough remain in its raw state too long **so we may not let the commandment become "leavened" by waiting too long before we perform it; but if it (a commandment) comes to your hand, perform it immediately.**

### THE VALUE OF TIME:

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who just missed a train.

To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask someone who just avoided an accident.



To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal at the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time with. And remember time waits for no one.

Question to consider:

- Why is it so bad if our mitzvos are 'chametz'? Why is there such an emphasis in doing the mitzvah immediately?
- What is an area in my life that I allow to become 'chametz' and how can I take steps to act with zerizus?

### III: FOCUS

בראשית כ"ב: א' - ג':

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹקִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָה אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ מֹרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ: וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרֹו וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֵתֹו וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵו וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֲלָהּ וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לֹו הָאֱלֹהִים:

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, "Abraham." He answered, "Here I am." "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him.

רש"י:

וישכם. נזכרו למצוה

The fact that Avraham rises early in the morning shows his zerizus in the mitzvah! However the Orchos Tzadikim furthers this idea by explaining that Avraham's zerizus wasn't just a physical energy to run and perform the Akeida but also a mental focus that helped him do the impossible.

ארחות צדיקים:

והנה תראה באברהם אבינו בענין עקדה, שנאמר (בראשית כב ג): "וישכם אברהם בבוקר..." ; ואף על פי שהיה קשה לו לשחוט את בנו יחידו - עשה רצון הבורא יתעלה בזריזות להשכים בבוקר. ומי שעושה מעשיו בזריזות, בזה הוכחה גדולה שהוא אוהב את בוראו, כעבד האוהב את אדוניו ומזרז בעצמו לעשות רצונו. כי הזריזות תלויה בלב האדם, כשאדם מפנה לבו מכל המחשבות האחרות שיש בו, ותופס מחשבה אחת - אז הוא מזדרז בלי ספק. כמו כן עשה אברהם, שהסיר מלבו אהבת בנו ואחז רצון בוראו, וכיטל אהבת בנו מפני אהבת הבורא יתברך. ועל כן נזדרז להשכים, כי היתה דעתו קשורה באהבת הבורא יתברך בחשק גדול

Concerning Abraham, our father, in the account of the sacrifice of Isaac, it is said : "And Abraham rose in the morning" (Gen. 22:3). Even though it was difficult for him to offer up his only son, he nevertheless did the will of the Creator with zeal, arising early in the morning. He who performs his deeds with zeal demonstrates convincingly that he loves his Creator as a servant who loves his master and hastens to do His will. **For zeal depends upon the heart of a man, as when a man cleanses his heart of all other thoughts that may be in it, and clings to one thought only, then he makes himself alert and will no doubt succeed.** Thus did Abraham do when he removed the love for his son from his heart and carried out the will of his Creator, nullifying his love for his son before his love for the Creator. Therefore, he made a point of rising early, for there was in his heart a great love for the Creator.

Questions to consider:

- What do you think the Orchos Tzadikim means when he says “For zeal depends upon the heart of a man”?
- In what areas do you find yourself focusing on one task vs. multitasking? When are you more successful?
- What area in life can you work to focus yourself with zerizus one task at hand?

**In conclusion/Wrap up:**

- **The reason people procrastinate doing mitzvos is because the Yetzer Hara tries to feed us excuses for not doing mitzvos**
- **At times we will come up with seemingly good justifications for not doing a mitzvah, but we must realize this is still a tactic of the Yetzer Hara**
- **A person must instill within himself the value that Hashem wants our avodas Hashem right now, and not get held back by thoughts of insecurity**
- **A person must work to implement zerizus by 1. Developing a mindset to appreciate mitzvos 2. working to physically strive to do mitzvos quickly, 3. And when doing the mitzvah, focusing on the task at hand.**