

2017 ALUMNI DVAR TORAH SNAPSHOTS

From: Love in the Beginning by Sam Englander (SBM 2015)

The primary danger of loving your family, is loving love in a way that doesn't allow the lovee their own identity.

From: The Hidden Relationship of Kibbud Av Vaeim by Rabbi Joshua Strulowitz (SBM 2000)

Our relationship with our siblings can be the greatest manifestation of *kibbud av vaeim*.

From: Parashat Zakhor: Carry On My Wayward Son by Miriam Gedwiser (SBM 2002)

If "remember Amalek" means "remember yourselves," then, grammatically, we are "Amalek" for the purposes of that sentence. If so, we may wonder whether we are Amalek in a deeper sense as well.

From: The Holy Anointing-Oil and the Pure Incense by Dan Margulies (WBM 2016)

In our service of God we can strive for holiness, but... holiness can be difficult to cultivate since it stems from a Divine source. But we can also strive for purity, a human trait that grows and is enriched by our input and our effort in our service of God.

From: Devotion and Completion by Davida Kollmar (SBM 2014)

Devotion to an action or the completion of an action are not enough; rather, it is important to show devotion to an action all along and to follow through until the end.

From: Parshas Tzav/Shabbos HaGadol - Precious Preparations by Alex Zaloum (WBM 2016)

From Hashem's perspective, the preparatory acts of a *mitzvah* and the *mitzvah* itself are equally important.

From: The House That Was? by Tuvy Miller (SBM 2013)

Once the land has been acquired, every effort must be made to eschew the role of the victor and to build homes and fortunes that do not benefit from the spoils of the defeated.

From: With Distinction: Egyptian Exodus and the Levitical Letter of the Law by Rabbi Shlomo Zuckier (SBM 2012)

As observant Jews, we "own" our attention to detail and hyper-legalism.

From: Wages for Sages by Rivital Singer (MA 2015)

It is impossible to correctly teach halacha if you're unaware of what's going on in your community.

From: Mah Tovv and the Transformative Power of Prayer by Rabbi Elliot Kaplowitz (SBM 2001)

The act of prayer has the power to transform the individual into a new person – about whom a different decree is possible.

From: Pinchas and the Complexity of Moral Relativism by Elie Lerea (SBM 2016)

Thinking about the Pinchas story as one of relative morality allows for an exploration of what it might mean when two acts that are fundamentally justified on their own terms come into conflict with each other.

From: God Marks the Signs to a Place of Refuge by Hillel Katchen (SBM 2004)

The natural world is random and unsafe, and God is the one who redeems us from this unsafe existence.

From: Purposeful Suffering by Leah Sarna (SBM 2014)

Suffering is positive, look back on suffering not in resentment but in gratitude, for ultimately it is a gift-- it brings forgiveness.

From: Madison & Rava by Jonathan Mansfield (SBM 2003)

By rejecting Abbaye's view of unity above all, Rava makes a far more challenging demand on us — to live together with ideological adversaries and not be tempted by the urge to coerce communal unity in the name of some higher principle, nor by the urge to denigrate and malign those with whom we disagree.

From: The Second Berith by Eli Shaubi (SBM 2012)

A nation is made up of individuals who must each fulfill their commitment on a personal level.

From: The Song of Torah by Noam Weinreich (SBM 2014)

The Torah is like a song in that different people can have different interpretations and understandings, and yet their voices are unified in one harmonious output.

From: Teshuvah in the Age of Dataism by Rabbi Avraham Bronstein (SBM 2002)

The question of questioning who we are – really – and to what extent we are simply responding to stimuli that are carefully calibrated by a computer somewhere to generate our response is critical, even existential.

From: The Primordial Covenant of Life by Avi Hirsch (SBM 2017)

All of humanity, in every generation, has a responsibility to fulfill its part in the [primordial] covenant by obeying Hashem's command to preserve life in the world.

From: Avraham and the Ideal of Rootless Outsider by Rabbi William Friedman (SBM 2003)

Jews have, of course, known both the benefits and the detriments of rootlessness over the millennia; the work of ameliorating the latter should not blind us to the former.

From: Shame Without Sin by Michael Pershan (SBM 2009)

When it comes to ethics, emotion is sometimes a better barometer than reason.

From: Employee Satisfaction and Avodas Hashem by Steve Gotlib (SBM 2017)

If Halakhic Judaism is to continue to thrive as it has in the past, it rests on the shoulders of each and every one of its adherents to figure out how to find personal satisfaction within its dictates.