

## **Thoughts Regarding *Keriat Shema* *She'al Hamitah* – The Bedtime Prayer**

The verse states: "It will not lie until it eats prey and drinks the blood of the slain;"<sup>1</sup> and Rashi explains, in the name of *Chazal* (our sages, of blessed memory); "It (the nation) does not lay down at nighttime upon his bed until he has annihilated or injured every damaging demon that comes to tear into him. How? He recites the *Keriat Shema* and places his spirit in the hand of the Almighty". Until here are his words.

And our rabbi, the *Ari* has written, that within *Keriat Shema*, are found the [proper] intents to correct and to atone for the iniquity of the senseless wasting of seed, which is exceedingly serious and blocks the ascent of the soul at night from returning to her master.

By means of these intents, a person can correct a tremendous amount of what he previously sinned. Although there is a correction for this sin by way of fasting and self-affliction, as explained in *Sha'ar Ruach Hakodesh* (discussed later on); behold, that correction is helpful to cleanse one of the iniquity that he not be brought to *Gehinim* (Hell), and to find pardon for him for these of his iniquities.

However, another immense and strong correction is also needed aside from that one, in order to correct and to strengthen those droplets themselves which went out in senselessness and were brought to within the *kelipah* (the husk of vanity), and to return them to the holiness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bamidbar* 23:24

And know, that one who transgressed of other transgressions, *mazikim* (certain damaging angels) cloak themselves over him and become deathly forces upon him. However, [of] one who engages in senseless emission of seed, his punishment is great without limit, since he draws down a [particular] soul from the higher world and sends it to *kelipat nogah* (the shining empty husks), and from there she [that soul] is joined unto through the strength of a particular damaging angel that becomes similar to a body for that soul.

It turns out therefore, that one who engages in senseless emission of seed causes those droplets of the souls which have destiny to go out from him as an aspect of children in the future, to become mixed within the impurity, and attired of bodies created from the side of the snake and from the woman of prostitution within the *kelipah*, and the holiness is sent back to impurity, and the good to the evil.

And in order to correct this iniquity, it is necessary that those bodies of the impurity pass on, which cloaked themselves to these souls. And by means of this [correction], these souls will escape from that place and return to their roots in the holiness.

So it is found therefore, that two intentions are necessary [in this]; one [intent] is to destroy those bodies [of the impurity], the second is to return those souls to the Divine Presence [high] above in order that they find correction there and gain proper form as have all souls. And after this, they will be found in the physical world as too, are all other souls.

There is also an iniquity similar to this [one], and it is, [of] one who has conjugal relations and does not

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delay [there] until all droplets have completely exited;  
and from those remaining droplets that emerge  
wastefully, even though they are not fit to impregnate,  
nonetheless, *mazikim* and destructive demons can be

created from them. And know, just as these *mazikin* exit from a man who involves himself in senseless emission of seed without a woman; so also does a woman create *mazikin* without a man.

And it is written in the holy Zohar (*Parashat Balak*), concerning the verse, "It will not lie until it eats prey;"<sup>2</sup> and it is also explained in [other] *Midrashim* of our sages, of blessed memory that thousands and myriads of *mazikin* are extinguished by a man every night through reciting the Shema Over the Bedside to correct this iniquity, and to annihilate those bodies of the *mazikin*. Also described, is that there are men who have such strength through their intentions that they are able to annihilate a thousand, one-hundred and twenty-five of these every night, and there are men who are only able to deter a single such damager one day after another.

And it is, that according to the number of days that one sinned, so are the additional days needed in contrast to these to correct this iniquity. And there is within this subject many details, and this is not the place to elaborate.

This tears into the teachings of the holy *Ari Zal* in his work *Sha'ar Hakavanot*. And who has seen anything as this? Who has heard [teachings] such as these and not trembled for his lowly soul? And who is able to say 'that I am clean of the iniquity of [senseless] seminal emission'?

And because the Holy One, blessed is He does not seek out his creation through plots, he [therefore]

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

places within their [own] hands the ability to correct and to return all unto its [proper] arrangement through [reciting the prayer of] *Keriat Shema she'al Hamitah* (the Bedside Shema).

And if one is contemptuous regarding his correction and doesn't recite the Bedside *Keriat Shema*, it is not [rightfully] upon *Hashem* (the Al-mighty) that he can find complaint, but only with himself, for he himself caused to transpire a situation without atonement.

And our sages of blessed memory have already alluded about this entire topic in the Talmud, for it is well known that all mysteries of the souls and of the [supernal] worlds are alluded to through their holy words.

It is also told that one who sleeps without reciting [the] *Keriat Shema* is considered as if he slept on the bed of a gentile woman (*Berachot 8a*). And their (the sages) intent is that it is just as is known of one who sleeps [carnally] with a gentile woman—that her soul attaches to him just as [would] a dog (*Sotah 3b*). And after his demise, he returns to incarnation as a dog (*Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh, Tikun 20*). So too, one who sleeps without reciting *Keriat Shema*, after his demise, those droplets that became *mazikin* cling of him, and challenge him through difficult and bitter anxiety within the *Kaf Hakelah*<sup>3</sup> in saying that 'you are our father', and there is no end to that one's situation until all of those bodies die off.

And therefore, he who is among the living must place upon his heart, to heed attentively, and make it a

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<sup>3</sup> *The Hollow of the Slingshot. See glossary.*

matter of his established deeds; to recite the Bedside *Keriat Shema* with most appropriate intention, and even regarding one who does not have the merit to come to [experience of] the fount [of Paradise] of the Al-mighty, and to intend his recital with the unifying intentions of the supernal attributes, he should study of this intention, as it is uncomplicated to understand.

And at the very least, one is able to cause the demise of the *mazikin*, and to return all of the sparks to their roots in the place of holiness.

And *Hashem* (the Al-mighty) is good: 'The Merciful One finds for the well-meaning'; and matters generally follow the intentions of the person.

And He is merciful and atones,

and will cause the children to return to their borders though the mystery of the [divine] Names: "He devoured wealth, but will disgorge it (***intend: Chab'vah***)<sup>4</sup>, the Al-mighty will purge it from his gut."<sup>5</sup> "In His arm, He gathers lambs (***intend: Biy'it***)<sup>6</sup>."<sup>7</sup> *Amain*. So might be His will.

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<sup>4</sup> *Shem 'Chab'vah'*. Pronounced in reference: '*Chab'uu*'. See glossary.

<sup>5</sup> *Iyov 20:15*

<sup>6</sup> *Shem 'Biy'it'*. See glossary.

<sup>7</sup> *Yeshiah 40:11*