
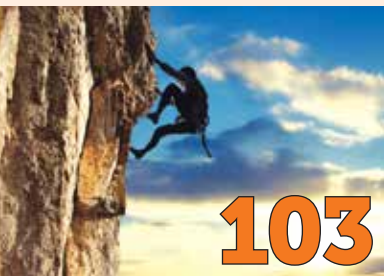


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Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

Rabbi Leo Dee's call for unity should resonate within the ears of every Jew. When terrorists set out to kill, they do so irrespective of a Jew's religious observance or political affiliation. When these savage killers ram their vehicles into crowds of innocents, when they bomb civilian targets, their aim is to kill any and all Jewish men, women and children. The tragic events surrounding Rabbi Dee's family are simply unimaginable and heart-wrenching. We as a people must remain united and be accepting of one another. Our survival demands that we do so.

SP Hersh
Lawrence, NY

Dear Editor,

I heard a phenomenal story last week. A baal teshuva who is now a great rav revealed that he couldn't commit to Judaism until he ridded himself of all his negative traits, which took three years. I sometimes think three months is an impressive time to work on a middah, but three years is extraordinary. This exemplifies the fact that bad behavior and the Torah repel one another. For most, breaking middot is a lifetime of work that never stops. One can be ninety-nine and consumed by anger requiring them to introspect.

Rabbi Biderman, shlita, has a famous Torah thought that applies to this time of the year. He notes that Sefirat HaOmer is the middle mitzvah of the Torah, meaning it stands at the center of importance. During Sefira, we learn Pirkei Avot, and

this is a time of breaking middot. Who we are is just as important as how much we know.

When it comes to knowledge versus middot, the purity of our heart, Rashi in Sanhedrin (106b) uses a unique language to characterize G-d, saying, "*Rachmana liba ba'ei* – G-d desires the heart." The heart personifies love, but what kind of love? In sefer Shmuel Aleph (17:32), Dovid HaMelech tells Shaul to "not let his heart fall." Love where your heart falls is a deep kind of love, the type of love the Rambam discusses (Laws of Teshuva 10:3), a love of infatuation with G-d. This explains the language of Rashi, referring to the G-d who desires our heart as Rachmana, a G-d of mercy who wants a reciprocal relationship of love. And Rachmana connotes a G-d of mercy who treats us with compassionate attributes, an inspiration to push us to be like him, "*Ma hu rachum v'chanun, af ata rachum v'chanun* - Just as Hashem is merciful and compassionate, so too, you should be merciful and compassionate." (Shabbos 133b).

Steven Genack

Dear Editor,

In 1968, when CBS Evening News anchor Walter Cronkite declared that the Vietnam War was unwinnable, President Lyndon B. Johnson knew that he had lost the support of middle America. He subsequently announced that he would not run or accept his party's nomination for a second term. The *New York Times* and many media commentators across

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Readers Poll

Would you rather have a terrible boss but a great job or a great boss but a terrible job?

20%

Bad Job, Good Boss

80%

Good Job, Bad Boss