

# A Silent Killer Among Us

*If you thought PETA was bad wait 'till you meet this nemesis. Sly, incipient, creeping and greedy. And many don't even know it's there. How can we protect ourselves against such an invisible force?*

Many of us experienced outrage over the three or four different groups that came to Crown Heights this erev Yom Kippur to protest a sacred minhag. Though their presence came as no surprise to us, as they have been making an annual practice out of condemning kapporos, it incensed us nonetheless.

“From where do these modern day organizations have the authority to denounce an age old Jewish custom?” we mused, as if there were any credibility to their preposterous arguments. They know as well as we what the Torah has to say against animal cruelty, yet they had the nerve to try and undermine kapporos’ source in the Torah; turning our own sources against us!

Imagine, if you will, a similar force, assaulting and questioning the very fabric of your life as a Jew. Though this force doesn’t take on the form of a public activist organization, but rather it is a silent killer. How would you react upon discovering a force within your midst that has been slowly but surely planting doubt and cultivating disinterest in the things that a Jew holds most dear and meaningful? Outrage, disgust, horror?

It may be time for some of us to take a deeper look to verify that such a force had indeed not crept into our lives and taken hold of our schedules. Are we sure that the allure of modern day, secular culture has not distracted us from what we essentially know to be the most productive way to focus our minds and our time?

Have we, perhaps, allowed the constant struggle

to keep up with the latest that our society has to offer overshadow the importance of what has really kept us together for centuries? Has the internet, the Iphone, the GPS, replaced timeless pages of gemora for us?

Does the job, the gym leave time for a shiur in our day?

While the world around us and all of its tempting glamour may not be as outspoken or deliberate as, for example, PETA’s attack on our religious practices, its effects can be all the more damaging. Precisely because it is silently chipping away at our priorities does it successfully escape our radar, replacing our most valuable and treasured lifestyle for fleeting moments of gratification.

Chazal and Chassidus are replete with powerful statements that describe both the obligation and privilege of Torah learning. Stating that it is the purpose of man’s existence, comparing it to all other mitzvos and depicting the unity with Hashem that it brings about.

In HaYom Yom, the Rebbe went so far as to say that “Daily Torah-study is crucial to life itself. This applies not only to the soul of the one studying but also to the souls of his family. It is through Torah that the atmosphere of the home becomes an atmosphere of Torah and piety.”

Let us preserve what is most precious to a Yid’s being, without allowing any outside influences to encroach on a Torah true lifestyle.

When we do this, we are assured blessings in all critical areas of life such as parnassa, health, peace, etc.

“Torah iz di beste schorah.”