

## **Behalotcha (5781): Enemy from Within**

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וְכִי־תִבְאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאֶרְצְכֶם עַל־הַצָּר הַצָּרֵר אֹתְכֶם וְהִרְעַתְּם בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וּנְזַכְרְתֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם  
וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶם מֵאִיְבֵיכֶם (בהעלתך י:ט)

If you go to war in your land against an adversary that oppresses you, you shall sound short blasts on the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God and be delivered from your enemies (Behalotcha 10:9).

The Baalei Mussar interpret this posuk by explaining that the greatest enemy a person can have is within him; what leads one astray and what entices one to sin comes from his inner Yetzer Hara rather than from their environment.

The Rav writes about the famous *makhloket* between the Rambam and Ramban -- Rambam (Maimonides) considers all Tefillah as part of the category of Biblical *Mitzvot min Hatorah* based upon the words וְלָעֲבֹדוּ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם “and to serve G-d with your entire heart” -- “What is the Service of the Heart? Service of the Heart is Tefillah.”

However, Ramban (Nachmanides) is of the opinion that Tefillah is usually a Rabbinic commandment, citing this posuk, Behalotcha 10:9, as an exceptional situation in which Tefillah is דאורייתא -- in a time of great distress, even Ramban sees Tefillah as a Biblical commandment.

Across the gamut of Israeli politicians and organizations it is generally agreed upon that those that pose the greatest threat to Israel are enemies living and working -- possibly even voting -- in the State of Israel. This is the simple *pshat* understanding of the posuk, וְכִי־תִבְאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאֶרְצְכֶם. If those attacking us are within our borders, they are the most dangerous; this is because they seem to present as law-abiding citizens and so they are treated like everyone else. Yet, we understand that a terrorist from within is not *just* a terrorist but is on the highest level of terrorism. It is for this reason that even the Ramban concludes Tefillah in such a scenario is required מדאורייתא.

Tefillah is required from us in the situations that have surfaced over these past few weeks for those of us in Israel. It is Tefillah מדאורייתא.

Under these trying circumstances, let us hope and pray for Heavenly protection וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶם מֵאִיְבֵיכֶם, “And you should be remembered before the Lord your God and thus be saved from your enemies.” Amen!