

Wear Sunscreen (Re'eh)

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it.
-Mary Schmich

There is a story of a man who is shown a vision of Hell. It is a roomful of people with their elbows locked straight. They have forks in their outstretched arms and tables brimming over with all the food they would want to eat. But their forks can't reach their mouths and so they live in eternal torment and hunger, not being able to feed themselves, though surrounded by food.

The room next door is Heaven. The people in Heaven have their elbows equally locked and are also surrounded by food, yet they're eating merrily. One person feeds his friend. Simple and effective, yet a solution those relegated to Hell can either never think of or bring themselves to do so.

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Prague, the *Kli Yakar* (1550-1619), (Deuteronomy 11:26) quotes a similar interpretation as to the equivalence between Heaven and Hell (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Nedarim 8b). According to the Talmud, Heaven and Hell are exactly the same "place" (not even separate rooms). In that common afterlife, the spiritual strength of the sun will be released. The wicked will be burned by it, while the righteous will rejoice in its splendor.

Somehow our actions in this world build a sort of 'spiritual sunscreen'. Those who develop it will enjoy the spiritual sun of the afterlife. Those who don't build up such a sunscreen will suffer in the world-to-come.

May we figure out how to get that sunscreen and put it on.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

On the marriage of Atara and Yair Tabori. Mazal Tov!