

Spirituality: Time

NILI ELUL 5782

Spiritual Preparation for Rosh
Hashana

Chovat HaTalmidim 4

Sefaria Edition 2021, Translated by Rabbi Francis Nataf.

🔍

מחלת העצלות וההתרפות ותרופתו ¹ The Illness of Laziness and Laxity and its Remedy

- העצלות היא המחלה היותר מזיקה והיותר מצוי' בנערים, אבל כמו כל החסרונות כן גם היא שונה בין נער לנער. יש נער שהוא עצל גמור, אוהב לישון הרבה וללכת בטל וכל עבודה עליו למשא, תרוצים שונים לו על כל דבר, כמו שאומר הפסוק אמר עצל שחל בדרך ארי בין הרחבות (משלי כ"ו י"ג) תמיד הוא צדיק בעיניו כיון שמלא תירוצים הוא, ובכל איש גדול ממנו ועובד הוא מוצא תמיד חסרונות, כדי לישר א"ע בלבו ולא יתביש ולא יתקנא בהם על שאינו עובד כעבודתם. ואף
- ² Laziness is the most harmful and common illness in youth. Yet, like most other illnesses, it too varies among different youths. There is a lad who is totally lazy: He loves to sleep and walk idly, and any work is a burden to him. He has various excuses for everything, as stated in the verse (Proverbs 26:13), "A lazy man says, "There's a cub on the road, a lion in the squares." He is always righteous in his own eyes, since he is full of excuses. And he always finds the shortcomings of someone better than himself who works. That way, he can justify himself in his heart and not be embarrassed or jealous about not

Rabbi Joseph b. Soloveitchik, "Sacred and Profane"

For the man of the street ancient history is something dim and distant, viewed in the *daemmerung* of the mythological coulisses of time.

The man of the street has no personal relationship with, no consciousness of continuity and interdependency between the glorious periods of antiquity and the emerging present. Even medieval and modern history, from which not many years separate us, appears mythical, romantic, and elusive — a refuge for escapist.

But the Jew of the *Masorah* has a different conception of time. Revelation and tradition erase the bounds of time. Distance in time is nonexistent for him. Thousands of years may have elapsed but he walks back and forth from antiquity to modern times. The chief success of the old cheder, although deficient in many respects, lay in this spirit of compenetration of a distant

past and a dim future with an immediate present.