

## Hedonic Treadmill



**1. The “Bread of Shame.”** The roots of this idea – that unearned reward is a source of shame – are from several places in the Zohar. See, for example Zohar 1:4a. The basis for the metaphor, however is found in Talmud Yerushalmi Orlah 1:3, **Rebbi Yudan bar Hanin said, a sign: He who eats from his neighbor’s is ashamed to look at him.**

And the first well-known use of the actual phrase is only found later in R. Yosef Karo’s *Maggid Mesharim* 2:8, which was written in the 1500’s

## 2. Chullin 17a

**If we say** that the dilemma is **with regard to** the **seven** years during **which they conquered** the land, **now, non-kosher items were permitted for them** during that period, **as it is written:** “And it shall be, when the Lord your God shall bring you into the land that He swore to your fathers, **and houses full of all good things...**and you shall eat and be satisfied” (Deuteronomy 6:10–11), **and Rabbi Yirmeya bar Abba says** that **Rav says:** **Cuts of pig meat [kotlei dahazirei]** that they found in the houses were permitted for them

3. **Rashi on Chullin 17a**, “For the Merciful One did not permit forbidden items except during the time of plunder.”

4. The philosophical meaning of "when the exception becomes the rule" centers on power, control, and how systems of authority justify breaking their own laws.

The most prominent framework for this concept comes from the Italian philosopher **Giorgio Agamben** and his theory of the **"State of Exception."**

### The Core Paradox

- **Suspension of Law:** A government or authority encounters a severe crisis (war, pandemic, economic collapse).
- **Temporary Power:** The authority suspends normal laws to protect the public.
- **The Shift:** The temporary emergency measures never go away. They become the permanent, everyday standard.

5. Read and compare:

**Deuteronomy 6:13:** “Revere only the ETERNAL your God; worship [God] alone; swear only by God’s name.”

Compare: **Deuteronomy 10:20:** You must revere the ETERNAL your God—whom you shall worship, to whom you shall cling to, and by whose name you shall swear.

**6. Ha’amek Davar to Deuteronomy 6:13** “Fear the Lord your God” ... meaning one should immerse their mind in the fear of God ... “and worship God” ... and here the meaning is that one must direct the war itself for the sake of Heaven, for the public good, or to fulfill the king’s command, which is an obligation under the Torah. But one must not fight for their own personal pleasure, in order to plunder and despoil, and the like. . . But here, all who go to war are equal regarding the positive commandment of “and worship God.” And at a time like this, there is also no opportunity to fulfill the positive commandment, “To God shall you cleave.”

**7. R. Avital Hochstein:** A time of war and plunder is simply not a time for cleaving to God. The danger of forgetting God does not arise from lack, but precisely from an abundance that is not the product of personal labor. Out of this, the Torah and the Netziv establish a clear boundary. In a time of war and plunder, there are three dangers: forgetting God, living under laws that do not allow for the full fulfillment of the covenant, and remaining in a state where cleaving (deveikut) is impossible.

8. Devekut (or *dveikus*) is a Jewish concept meaning "clinging" or "cleaving" to God. It describes an intimate, constant state of God-consciousness, spiritual communion, and closeness to the Divine.

Meaning and Origins

- **Biblical Root:** Comes from the Hebrew word *davak* (to stick or cleave), based on verses like Deuteronomy 11:22 to walk in God's ways and cling to Him. [\[1\]](#)

- **Kabbalah:** Developed by Jewish mystics as an elevated meditative state achieved during prayer, Torah study, or performing commandments (*mitzvot*). [\[1\]](#)
- **Hasidism:** Democratized the idea, teaching that everyday people can maintain constant awareness of God during normal, daily activities through joy, music (*niggunim*), and prayer.

#### How It Is Practiced

- **Mindfulness:** Redirecting thoughts back to God's presence whenever the mind wanders during the day.
- **Deep Prayer:** Using heartfelt concentration (*kavvanah*) or personal, spontaneous prayer (*hitbodedut*).
- **Elevating the Mundane:** Finding holiness in simple acts like eating, walking, or talking