



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SHLACH - 5779

In our 24th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net> It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored anonymously in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yeziel Zaydel Dov

To sponsor a parsha sheet contact cshulman@parsha.net
(proceeds to tzedaka)

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>

to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Jun 27, 2019, 11:45 AM

subject: Rav Frand - Nogeah B'Davar - Overcoming Bias

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Shlach

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya & Henya Chana Raizel bas Rochel Bayla.

We Know We Are 'Nogeah', but We Won't Let That Influence Us – Famous Last Words

The story of the Meraglim [Spies] is one of the more difficult stories in the Torah to understand. The Torah says, "Send forth for yourself anashim..." [Bamidbar 12:2]. Chazal say that the word anashim indicates that they were tzadikim. So, these people were righteous individuals. Rav Dovid Povarsky, z"l, points out, in a talk about the Meraglim (given in 1987), that not only did these individuals have a reputation of being tzadikim, but their mere act of going on this mission was itself an act of righteousness.

"Spying" is dangerous business. If someone were to fill out a life insurance form and list as his line of employment "CIA; Covert Operations", he will certainly need to pay a premium rate for life insurance. It is a dangerous occupation. Moshe Rabbeinu tells these righteous individuals, in effect, "I am sending you on an extremely dangerous mission." They responded, "Fine, we are ready to go."

Add to that another factor. The Zohar writes that, at the end of the day, the reason they came back with such a bad report was because they knew that even though at this point in time when they were in the Wilderness they occupied positions of leadership, they knew that when Bnei Yisroel enter Eretz Yisrael – for whatever reason it may be – they were no longer going to retain their positions of leadership.

If someone were to ask me to go on a dangerous mission, put myself in danger and – "Guess what? – when you get back, I am going to fire you," I would say "Get somebody else." Most people would say "Why don't you ask the people you are going to appoint to be tribal leaders in Eretz Yisrael? Let them face this dangerous mission!"

The very fact that they went on a dangerous mission, knowing that the result of the mission would be their losing their jobs, is itself justification for giving them the title anashim = tzadikim!

So, the question is – why in fact did they accept the mission? This is a mission that was going to cost them their jobs, their honor, and their whole roles in life! The answer is – and herein lies one of the great truths of life – that they thought: "We will be able to handle it. We know it is a dangerous mission. We know this may cost us our jobs, but we will be able to overcome any personal bias and prejudice that we have, and we will be able to report the truth."

Moshe Rabbeinu had grave doubts whether they would be able to do that. Chazal say that Moshe changed the name of his disciple Hoshea, to Yehoshua to connote, "May G-d (K-ah) save you from the counsel of the spies." Moshe sensed that something amiss may occur. Kalev, Chazal say, went to pray by the gravesite of his ancestors. Why were they so worried? The answer is that Moshe realizes that all these twelve Meraglim are walking a tightrope. They will be going on a dangerous mission, one in which they will be tempted (consciously or subconsciously) to skew the information they are supposed to report. They did it because they said, "We will be able to do it anyway."

This is a lesson for all of us, and this is something that happens all the time. You ask somebody for advice and his answer to you is "I may be 'nogeah' [have a personal interest in the matter], but this is what the truth is anyway..." When you hear those words – forget it! Greater and wiser people have not been able to overcome personal interest and subconscious bias to give sound and accurate advice about matters which affect them negatively. That is exactly what the Meraglim said. "We know we might have an agenda, and we know we might lose our jobs, but we will be able to give a fair and balanced opinion of the situation, and we will not be swayed by our personal interests!" Famous last words!

To me, this is one of the greatest challenges of life. In varying situations, we all have different agendas. We all have our personal biases. How does a person overcome that? Merely recognizing and saying "I am a 'nogeah' but..." is not a defense at all. Whenever you hear those words, run the other way. The only solution I have to this conundrum of life is to ask someone else who is absolutely not 'nogeah' for their opinion on the matter. You cannot trust yourself and you cannot trust anybody else who might have any kind of personal involvement or who might be impacted by the action to be taken as a result of the advice being sought. To delude oneself into thinking, "Yes, I will be able to overcome it" is the mistake that the Meraglim made. This is precisely Moshe Rabbeinu's fear. It is Kalev's fear. The Spies needed to walk a very thin line. At the end of the day, they failed. As the Zohar says, their personal agenda and 'nogeus' did them in.

The Difference Between the Spies of Moshe and the Spies of Yehoshua bin Nun

Sefer Be'er Mayim Chayim takes note of the dialog that takes place upon the return of the Meraglim. Their report – that the inhabitants of Canaan lived in fortified cities, that they were strong and gigantic individuals, and that the fruit were extraordinarily large – was all true. The Ramban notes this in his Chumash commentary. The question is, when and where did they veer from the truth?

When they gave their report, and they were trying to telegraph a message to the nation that the people were very mighty, suddenly Kalev silenced them. "Be quiet. You are not right! We WILL be able to conquer them. The Ribono shel Olam was with us until now, and He will be with us in the future."

At that point, their story changed. Rather than it being an objective accurate report, they added subjectivity. The subjectivity was "A land that eats up its inhabitants" [Bamidbar 13:32]. That is editorial comment. What happened? Up until now, they reported the truth. The facts were accurate. Those were the "facts on the ground." They did live in fortified cities; they were large and strong; and so forth. As soon as Kalev says: "No. We will be able to

conquer the people,” then their tune changes. Suddenly, they start speaking ill about the country and they make up facts. Why did that happen? Here is another great truth of life. The desire to win and to be right is an extremely powerful Yetzer HaRah [urge of the evil inclination]. When Kalev told them “Be quiet. You are wrong!” they immediately needed to counter, “No. We are not wrong!” to the point of fabricating facts – if necessary – to prove that they were right and Kalev was wrong. When someone is challenged, his instinctive reaction is “No! I will show you that I am right.” Such is human nature: “I want to win.” As soon as Kalev challenged them, it became a personal duel. “Who is right – we or you?” It became a matter of honor. People do not like to lose.

Recently, someone came to me and told me that he went to a Din Torah. The facts of the case are too complicated for me to go into right now, and the details are not really relevant to my point. But to make it simple, the Din Torah centered around who had the right to a piece of property. There was a several-hundred-thousand-dollar issue at stake here. The Beis Din, in effect, ruled in favor of one of the parties, and he had the option of either taking the property or walking away from the property and being nicely compensated for it.

Objectively speaking, the wise thing to do would have been to walk away from the property and accept payment for it. Take the money and run. Let the other guy stick with the property. The person came to me and said “I still cannot believe what I did! I insisted, ‘I want the property.’” Now he comes to me a week later and tells me “It was the stupidest thing I ever did. I am saddled with this property; I have to mortgage it; it is financially ruinous to me.” So, I asked him “So, then why did you do it?” He said “It is because I have been fighting with this person for so long over this piece of property that when I had the opportunity to take it, I said ‘I want to win!’ even though here, ‘winning’ was ‘losing.’” Winning the property was financially more costly to him than losing it would have been.

That is the way we are. We want to win. Winning drives so much in life. It drives people in business. It drives people in politics. It drives people in sports. We want to win. Therefore, the Yetzer HaRah to win was so overwhelming that the person made a foolish decision, by his own admission. Shortly afterward, he himself was able to point this out to himself.

That is what happened by the Meraglim as well. Kalev silenced the people. When he said, “You’re wrong!” their instinctive reaction was “No. We are not wrong! We are going to be right!” And then their story changed, because it became personal. When it becomes personal – when it becomes a matter of who is going to win – then people pull out all the stops.

There is a beautiful comment from the Chidushei HaRi”m – the Gerrer Rebbe. The Haftorah of Parshas Shelach is a chapter from Sefer Yehoshua. Yehoshua bin Nun also sent out two spies. They happened to be Kalev and Pinchas. They were his two spies. The pasuk uses the word “Cheres Laimor”. The simple interpretation is that the word Cheres is like Cheresh [mute]. The message was very discreet and quiet. Chazal say, however, that the word Cheres indicates that they took with them earthenware. Their “cover” so that people would not suspect them of being spies, is that they took with them earthenware objects to sell. They claimed they were itinerant earthenware salesmen. They went around Canaan and Yericho spying out the land, but their cover story was that they were pottery salesmen.

Why pottery? Why did they not sell Fuller Brush? (A person must be of a certain age to appreciate that reference.) The Chidushei HaRi”m makes a beautiful observation. Chazal say that an earthenware vessel only transmits impurity internally (mi’tocho). If something touches an earthenware vessel externally, it does not become impure. It only becomes tameh if the source of impurity goes into the internal airspace of the earthenware vessel.

The reason for this is that the value of earthenware vessels is not their material. The material is virtually worthless. The whole value of such a vessel is its function. That is why, whereas a metal utensil contaminates

externally (because its material has intrinsic value), an earthenware vessel only contaminates internally.

The Chidushei HaRi”m writes that these spies (Kalev and Pinchas) wanted to remind themselves: We are nothing! We have no value! It is not about us! It is about our job, our function – just like an earthenware vessel. The essence of an earthenware vessel is only for the job that it is going to perform. That, too, is our mission, to perform our job, but otherwise to be like we are non-existent. We are pilotless drones. We do not have wisdom. We do not have intellect. We are individuals who have been sent on a mission; but personally, we are like Kley Cheres.

The problem with the previous set of spies was that they became personally involved. Kalev and Pinchas took heed to not repeat this mistake. They were not going to “need to win”. They were not going to let their egos get involved. The spies sent out by Yehoshua bin Nun were like earthenware vessels – mere unimportant functionaries. Therefore, despite the tragic fate of the previous set of Meraglim, the spies of Yehoshua bin Nun successfully completed their mission.

*Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org
Rav Frand © 2019 by Torah.org.*

<http://rabbisacks.org/fear-of-freedom-shelach-lecha-5779/>

Fear of Freedom (Shelach Lecha 5779)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

The episode of the spies was one of the most tragic in the entire Torah. Who sent them and to what end is not entirely clear. In this week’s parsha, the text says that it was God who told Moses to do so (Num. 13:1–2). In Deuteronomy (1:22), Moses says that it was the people who made the request. Either way, the result was disaster. An entire generation was deprived of the chance to enter the Promised Land. The entry itself was delayed by forty years. According to the Sages, it cast its shadow long into the future.[1]

Moses told the spies to go and see the land and bring back a report about it: Are the people many or few, strong or weak? What is the land itself like? Are the cities open or fortified? Is the soil fertile? They were also tasked with bringing back some of its fruit. The spies returned with a positive report about the land itself: “It is indeed flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit” There then followed one of the most famous ‘buts’ in Jewish history: “But – the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak [‘the giant’] there” (Num. 13:28).

Sensing that their words were demoralising the people, Caleb, one of the spies, interrupted with a message of reassurance: “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” However, the other spies insisted: “We cannot attack those people; they are stronger than we are.... All the people we saw there are of great size.... We seemed like grasshoppers....” (Num. 13:30–33). The next day, the people, persuaded that the challenge was completely beyond them, expressed regret that they had ever embarked on the Exodus and said, “Let us appoint a leader and go back to Egypt” (Num. 14:4).

Thus far the narrative. However, it is monumentally difficult to understand. It was this that led the Lubavitcher Rebbe to give a radically revisionary interpretation of the episode.[2] He asked the obvious question. How could ten of the spies come back with a defeatist report? They had seen with their own eyes how God had sent a series of plagues that brought Egypt, the strongest and longest-lived of all the empires of the ancient world, to its knees. They had seen the Egyptian army with its cutting-edge military technology, the horse-drawn chariot, drown in the sea while the Israelites passed through it on dry land. Egypt was far stronger than the Canaanites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and other minor kingdoms that they would have to

confront in conquering the land. Nor was this an ancient memory. It had happened not much more than a year before.

What is more, they were entirely wrong about the people of the land. We discover this from the book of Joshua, in the passage read as the haftarah to Shelach Lecha. When Joshua sent spies to Jericho, the woman who sheltered them, Rahab, described for them what her people felt when they heard that that the Israelites were on their way:

I know that the Lord has given this land to you. A great fear of you has fallen on us... We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt... When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. (Josh. 2:9–11)

The people of Jericho were not giants. They were as fearful of the Israelites as the Israelites were of them. Nor was this something that was disclosed only later. The Israelites of Moses' day had already sung in the Song at the Sea:

The peoples have heard; they tremble;

Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;

Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;

All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

Terror and dread fall upon them;

Because of the greatness of Your arm, they are still as a stone.

(Ex. 15:14–16)

How was it that they forgot what, not long before, they knew?

What is more, continued the Rebbe, the spies were not people plucked at random from among the population. The Torah states that they were "men who were heads of the People of Israel." They were leaders. They were not people given lightly to fear. The questions are straightforward, but the answer the Rebbe gave was utterly unexpected. The spies were not afraid of failure, he said. They were afraid of success.

Never had a people lived so close to God.

If they entered the land, their lifestyle of camping around the Sanctuary, eating manna from heaven, living in continuous contact with the Shechinah would vanish. They would have to fight battles, maintain an army, create an economy, farm the land, worry about the weather and their crops, and all the other thousand distractions that come from living in the world. What would happen to their closeness to God? They would be preoccupied with mundane and material pursuits. Here they could spend their entire lives learning Torah, lit by the radiance of the Divine. There they would be one more nation in a world of nations with the same kind of economic, social, and political problems that every other nation has to deal with.

They were afraid of success, and the subsequent change it would bring about. They wanted to spend their lives in the closest possible proximity to God. What they did not understand was that God seeks, in the Midrashic phrase, "a dwelling in the lower worlds."^[3] One of the great differences between Judaism and other religions is that while others seek to lift people to heaven, Judaism seeks to bring heaven down to earth.

Much of Torah is about things not conventionally seen as religious at all: labour relations, agriculture, welfare provisions, loans and debts, land ownership, and so on. It is not difficult to have an intense religious experience in the desert, or in a monastic retreat, or in an ashram. Most religions have holy places and holy people who live far removed from the stresses and strains of everyday life. About this there is nothing unusual at all.

But that is not the Jewish project, the Jewish mission. God wanted the Israelites to create a model society where human beings were not treated as slaves, where rulers were not worshipped as demigods, where human dignity was respected, where law was impartially administered to rich and poor alike, where no one was destitute, no one was abandoned to isolation, no one was above the law, and no realm of life was a morality-free zone. That requires a society, and a society needs a land. It requires an economy, an

army, fields and flocks, labour and enterprise. All these, in Judaism, become ways of bringing the Shechinah into the shared spaces of our collective life. The spies did not doubt that Israel could win its battles with the inhabitants of the land. Their concern was not physical but spiritual. They did not want to leave the wilderness. They did not want to become just another nation among the nations of the earth. They did not want to lose their unique relationship with God in the reverberating silence of the desert, far removed from civilisation and its discontents. This was the mistake of deeply religious men – but it was a mistake.

Clearly this is not the plain sense of the narrative, but we should not dismiss it on that account. It is, as it were, a psychoanalytical reading of the unconscious mindset of the spies. They did not want to let go of the intimacy and innocence of the time-out-of-time and place-out-of-place that was the experience of the wilderness. Ultimately the spies feared freedom and its responsibilities.

But Torah is about the responsibilities of freedom. Judaism is not a religion of monastic retreat from the world. It is a religion of engagement with the world. God chose Israel to make His presence visible in the world. Therefore Israel must live in the world. The Jewish people were not without their desert-dwellers and ascetics. The Talmud speaks of R. Shimon b. Yochai living for thirteen years in a cave. When he emerged, he could not bear to see people engaged in such earthly pursuits as ploughing a field (Shabbat 33b). He held that engagement with the world was fundamentally incompatible with the heights of spirituality (Brachot 35b). But the mainstream held otherwise.^[4] It maintained that "Torah study without an occupation will in the end fail and lead to sin" (Mishnah Avot 2:2).

Maimonides speaks of people who live as hermits in the desert to escape the corruptions of society.^[5] But these were the exceptions, not the rule. It is not the destiny of Israel to live outside time and space as the world's recluses. Far from being the supreme height of faith, such a fear of freedom and its responsibilities is, according to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the sin of the spies.

They did not want to contaminate Judaism by bringing it into contact with the real world. They sought the eternal dependency of God's protection and the endless embrace of His all-encompassing love. There is something noble about this desire, but also something profoundly irresponsible. The spies demoralised the people and provoked the anger of God. The Jewish project – the Torah as the constitution of the Jewish nation under the sovereignty of God – is about building a society in the land of Israel that so honours human dignity and freedom that it will one day lead the world to say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. 4:6).

The Jewish task is not to fear the real world but to enter and transform it, healing some of its wounds and bringing to places often shrouded in darkness fragments of Divine light.

Shabbat Shalom

Office of Rabbi Sacks

PO Box 72007

London

NW6 6RW

Tel: +44(0)20 7286 6391

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com> via
auth.ccsend.com

reply-to: jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com

to:

date: Jun 28, 2019, 12:53 AM

subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur - Audio and Print

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Shelach 5779

1 - Topic - The greater the Kedusha the more the Kochos Hatuma attack
As we prepare for Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Shelach. The Parsha of the
Meraglim. The Parsha of many Mitzvos which are mentioned here for the

very first time. I would like to begin with a Kla'liosdika (a general) thought regarding Mitzvos in general and the Meraglim in particular.

I would like to begin with something that Rav Pam used to say, Margila B'pumai, and I probably mentioned it once in Parshas Emor, that the GRA once visited his mother's Kever together with his brother on the Yahrtzeit and on the way back commented on how happy their mother was that they had come.

The next Yahrtzeit came around and the GRA's brother naturally went back to pick him up. After all, if the mother was so happy, something that only someone like the GRA could recognize, then it should be repeated. The GRA said no. The GRA said I suffered much from visiting the Bais Hak'vares.

The point that Rav Pam made was that the higher Kedusha that someone is, the more that the Kochos Hatumah attach themselves. We don't suffer from sitting in a Bais Olam because the Kochos Hatumah are not interested in us. The Heilege GRA, with the Heilege Kedusha that he had, was such that the Kochos Hatumah attached themselves to him and Rav Pam said that that is why a Kohen who has a Yichus of Kedusha doesn't go to a Bais Hak'vares. That is why the Minhag is that a M'uberes doesn't go because the child that she is carrying is in Kedusha. The Kochos Hatumah attach to a higher level of Kedusha. This Yesod I have seen over the years in many places.

Regarding our Parsha, it is a Davar Pele, how such holy people such as the Meraglim could go into Eretz Yisrael and fall as they did. The answer is just the opposite. It is because they were great people and great people who were going to a Makom Kadosh, so there the Nisyonos are greater. As it says in Koheles 7:14 Gam Es Zeh Leumas Zeh Asah HaElo-kim The more the Kedusha the more the Nisayon and they didn't make it with the Nisayon. In the Netziv's Meishiv Davar, Teshuva Mem Daled, he answers with this Yesod a Davar Pele that when Ezra during the time when the Jews returned to build the second Bais Hamikdash, very few Jews returned comparatively. There were 40,000 - 50,000 Jews that returned and that was it. He says that the Yidden were afraid to go back. They knew Kedushas Eretz Yisrael was such that brings with it Nisyonos of Avodah Zora. They were fearful to go to a place with elevated Kedusha because comes with it an elevated level of Nisayon.

I saw also another Pele which is answered with this. How is it that Dinah was kidnapped for Znus, such a Heilige woman and she was kidnapped for Znus. It happened to Sara and it happened to Rivka. How is it that in four generations that three of them should be kidnapped for Znus? A Davar Pele! When do such things happen?

The answer is the same idea. The greater the Kedusha the more the Kochos Hatuma attack. That is why it happened to them as well.

I saw answered with this also a different idea. The Kohen on Yom Kippur, they kept him up all night and prayed that he shouldn't come to Tumas Keri, personal Tumah. It is a Pele! How many people come to this type of Tumah on Yom Kippur? That a Kohen Gadol, a Heiligie Yid should come Lidai Tumah?

Farkert, because it is the holiest night of the year, at the holiest place and with the holiest person, the Kochos Hatumah attack. This is a Yesod that the greater the Kedusha the more the test. I believe that it is the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh in Parshas Chukas who says that is why Tumas Meis at least according to some only applies to a Guf Hayehudi and not to a Guf Ha'akum. This is because the higher the Kedusha the higher the Shaychus that a Davar Tamei has.

This is an important Yesod. It is a Yesod to recognize. With this in mind on the last day of the Zman, during the summer in Bein Haz'manim, some young men who are very Matzliach in their learning all year, they really learn with Hasmada and Havana, find it very hard to make it to the Bais Medrash. I am in camp and I see that there are some who come plenty and there are some who you don't see in the Bais Medrash, maybe the first day and that is it. It is a Pele! I realized the Kochos Hatuma attack. When there is an opening, they attack. Farkert, somebody who Takeh has a Geshmak in learning, has the Madreiga in learning have to be careful.

If you go to Eretz Yisrael you have to be careful as it is a Makom Kadosh. Somebody who is devoted to learning has to be careful. The Yeitzer Hora Shtells every time it has the opportunity. A very important Yesod. There is a similar idea mentioned in Rav Schwab's Sefer about the Nisyonos of the Dor Habidbar, how those Nisyonos also came because they were on a higher level of Kedusha.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

to: rav-kook-list@googlegroups.com

subject: [Rav Kook Torah]

Korach: The Lesson of Ma'aser

Rav Kook Torah

Levies for Levites

After the Korach rebellion, challenging the special status of the Levites and the kohanim, God enumerated the various ways the Jewish people support the tribe of Levi. The Levites were engaged in the Temple service and teaching the nation, yet received no inheritance in the Land of Israel.

“To the descendants of Levi, I am now giving all the tithes (ma'aser) in Israel as an inheritance. This is exchange for their work, the service that they perform in the Communion Tent.” (Num. 18:21-22)

It is interesting to note that produce does not always need to be tithed. For example, we need not set aside ma'aser when snacking on fruit while it is still in the orchard. Unless the produce has entered the home, it does not require tithing.

At what exact point does one need to set aside a tenth for the Levites?

The Sages disagreed on this matter. Rabbi Yanai said that the fruit must cross the entrance of the house. According to Rabbi Yochanan, it is enough to enter the courtyard (Berachot 36a).

Why should tithing only be obligatory after the fruit has entered our property? And why did the Sages disagree whether it is the entrance to the house or the courtyard that determines this obligation?

Conquering Avarice

In addition to supporting the Levites, tithing fulfills an important function for the farmer donating his produce. People are naturally possessive of their property and money. Tithing provides us with the opportunity to rise above these selfish feelings of possessiveness, and contribute towards the spiritual aspirations of the community. Instead of merely satisfying our own personal pleasure, our produce acquires an elevated purpose, supporting the Temple service and the education of the nation.

We can distinguish between two levels of possession of property: de facto and emotional .

- De facto possession is when an object clearly belongs to us. It is under our complete control and inside our domain.

- Emotional possession is when we feel that an object belongs to us.

However, it is not fully in our domain or jurisdiction, and it may be difficult to assert our ownership.

Rabbi Yanai spoke of the house-entrance as the moment at which one is obligated to tithe. He referred to the first form of ownership, de facto possession. The house is clearly one's private domain, where his property is under his de facto control. According to Rabbi Yanai, the mitzvah of ma'aser teaches us to overcome and free ourselves from the self-centered sentiments of possessiveness when we are in complete, de facto control.

Rabbi Yochanan, on the other hand, pointed to the courtyard as the determining factor. The courtyard is a legal gray area. It is a place where the general public has access; yet, it also has characteristics of a private domain. Here we have a sense of ownership, even though it may not always be easy to enforce that sentiment. According to Rabbi Yochanan, even this weaker sense of possessiveness must be refined, so that we can completely elevate our private desires to universal, spiritual goals.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com
http://www.ou.org/torah/author/Rabbi_Dr_Tzvi_Hersh_Weinreb
from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>
reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

OU Torah
Of Grasshoppers and Jewish Pride
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Just as there were six million victims, so were there at least six million stories.

One of those stories seems to have occurred many times, because I've heard it told by quite a few survivors. It is the story of two or more Jews, witnessing the sadistic and murderous scenes around them, but momentarily spared from being victims themselves.

In the midst of that horror, one Jew turns to the other and says, "Yankel, you are always urging us to be thankful to God for what we have. What do we have to thank Him for now? Our brothers and sisters and children are being tortured and butchered in front of our eyes, and, in all likelihood, these Nazis will come after us next!"

To which Yankel replies, "We can be thankful that we are Jews and not Nazis. Not only can we be thankful, but we can be proud. We can be proud that we are Jews and have retained our humanity, and not become the beasts that these Nazis have become. We can be proud that we can still claim to have been created b'tzelem Elokim, in the image of God. Our tormentors have forever relinquished that claim."

There are numerous other stories told with similar motifs, indicating that Jews were able to retain their Jewish pride even in the unspeakably horrible conditions of the Holocaust.

Thankfully, Jewish pride has also been amply manifested in much happier circumstances. The encouraging cheers which echoed across the world as Jews from behind the Iron Curtain heroically struggled for their freedom, and the celebratory cheers which resounded when they finally achieved that freedom, expressed that pride dramatically. "Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish nation lives," were the words chosen to express that pride.

Jewish pride is sometimes even evidenced in American culture, such as in the boasting one hears about the Hank Greenbergs and Sandy Koufaxes whose Jewish identities were apparent even to the baseball fans of yesteryear.

In more significant areas of human accomplishment, have we not all occasionally gloated over the disproportionately numerous Jewish Nobel Prize winners in science and literature? Do not the lifesaving medical discoveries of generations of Jewish physicians stir Jewish pride in our hearts?

Most important, of course, are the contributions that Jewish leaders have made, from the times of Abraham to this very day, to human religious development and to the advancement of ethics and morality for all mankind. In is sad, therefore, and some would say tragic, that Jewish pride seems to be on the decline in recent times. The consequences of such a decline are poignantly illustrated in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Shelach (Numbers 13:1-15:41).

We read this week of the adventures, better misadventures, of the spies. They spent forty days scouting out the Promised Land and discovered much that was very good. But in their report back to "Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community," they chose to emphasize that "the people who inhabit the country are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large."

When Caleb, the very embodiment of Jewish pride, confidently assured the people that "we shall surely overcome it," they shouted words of rebuttal, culminating in this assertion: "...we saw giants there, and we looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them." (Numbers 13:33).

Grasshoppers! No more, no less.

An individual with such a puny self image is doomed to a life of mediocrity, if not failure and frustration. A nation which perceives itself as grasshoppers, which lacks proper pride in itself, has already fallen victim to God's curse: "And I will break your proud glory..." (Leviticus 26:19) Such a nation cannot live up to its mission.

There are those who would object and insist that the Almighty wants us to be humble and that pride is a negative value. To those, we must object that just as there is a "false pride," which is really nothing but arrogance, there is also "false humility," which leads one to shirk responsibility and to eschew greatness.

I have at least once before referred in this column to some of my classmates in high school and college and yeshiva who were voted "most likely to succeed" but who by no means succeeded. Many of them suffered from this very "false humility," and it resulted in their failure to use the talents and skills with which they were blessed in a properly prideful manner. That was their loss, and a loss to the world.

The Jewish people, as a nation, can easily fall prey to this "false humility." As a nation, despite our faults and shortcomings, we have much to be proud of. We have much to teach the world spiritually because of our rich biblical and rabbinic heritage. And we continue to contribute to mankind's material welfare in countless ways.

We would do well to heed the pithy counsel of an early 20th century Chassidic sage, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch, who said, "Man must be proud, but he must grow higher and higher, and not wider and wider." What he meant to say is that if we use our pride to grow wider, we are bound to infringe upon another person's space. That is selfish arrogance, and not proper pride.

But if our pride motivates us not to grow wider, but to grow ever higher and higher, we displace no one. Instead, we draw closer to the Almighty and do what He demands of us.

Jewish pride takes us higher and higher. Am Yisrael Chai.

<http://www.ravaviner.com/search?q=shelach>

יִי Parashat Shelach: The Sin which Haunts Us

ב-יז תרע"א Mordechai Tzion 21:17 -ב

[Tal Chermon, Parashat Shelach Lecha]

Torat HaRav Aviner

Inspiring Torah from Rav Shlomo Aviner, Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim
On the way to Eretz Yisrael through the vast threatening desert, the Nation of Israel continued to undergo crisis after crisis. These crises taught them the values of the Torah and what it means to belong to the Nation of Israel. The greatest crisis was that of the Spies. Their failure revealed Israel's rejection of the Promised Land. The severity of the sin may be deduced from the severity of the punishment: "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness" (Bemidbar. 14:29). All adults who accepted the evil report of the spies were to die in the desert.

But that was not the end. This sin has haunted us throughout the centuries. The maxim, "The deeds of the fathers are a precedent for the sons" (see commentary of Ramban to Bereshit 12:6) holds in both positive and negative cases. It is not merely a case of formal precedent-setting; the deeds of the fathers set a precedent for us because we are their continuation, cut from the same cloth. We have inherited their character traits, and our deeds therefore reflect and repeat theirs, both positively and negatively. The sin of the spies revealed a certain spiritual flaw, a lack of faith and of love for the Land, of indifference, emotional distance, and even rejection. This flaw has passed from one generation to the next, infecting the sons and their sons after them. Historically, the phenomenon of rejection of Eretz Yisrael repeated itself during the Second Temple Period, when only a small fraction of the Nation chose to return to Eretz Yisrael. In general, it was the poor and underprivileged who followed Ezra. The scholars, the wealthy, and the Levi'im chose to remain in Babylonia, a prosperous, flourishing, Jewish

community (See Ezra 2 with Rashi. See Ketubot 25, Kiddushin 69a with Rashi). According to the Kuzari (2:24): "Only a few of them responded to Ezra's call, most, including the important people, remained in Babylonia." A similar phenomenon occurred in the past century when many great rabbis and leaders ignored the national revival and preferred to remain in the Exile. Sadly, just as the spiritual flaw and the sin repeat themselves in history, so too does the punishment. The weeping which occurred that night, the eve of Tisha B'Av, has become "a weeping for all generations." (Ta'anit 29a). Both the First and the Second Temples were destroyed on Tisha B'av. The exile from Spain and World War I, among others, began on Tisha B'Av. Only partial punishment was meted out to the Generation of the Wilderness. We have been receiving the remainder bit by bit ever since.

Who were the men who spoke evil of Eretz Yisrael? "And Moshe sent them from the wilderness of Paran according to the word of G-d, all of them important personages, the leaders of the Children of Israel" (Bemidbar 13:3). "They were important men, and the righteous ones at that time" (Rashi *ibid.*). There was no sudden change in their personalities, the weakness which had existed in potential simply now found its expression: "And they went ... and they came" (*ibid.* 13:26). "Just as they returned with bad intent, so too did they start out with bad intent" (Sotah 35a). Were they wicked or were they righteous?

The answer is that there are different kinds of righteousness. There are people who are personally Torah observant, but when it comes to national concerns, their behavior leaves much to be desired. In contrast, there are those who are devoted with all their hearts to their Land and Nation, but are not personally devout. King Shaul, for example, was more righteous in his personal life than King David (Yoma 22b and Moed Katan 22b), but he failed as a King when it came to leading the Nation in the war against Amalek.

This also explains the conclusion of the Chesed L'Avraham (Ma'ayan 3, Nahar 12) that anyone who lives in Eretz Yisrael may be considered righteous, otherwise the Land would expel him.

Superficially, this is hard to comprehend. However, if this refers NOT to the righteousness of his private life - how observant he is of the 613 Mitzvot - but rather to how devoted he is to his Land and Nation, then it is quite reasonable. Both types of righteousness are needed, and the Redemption will come when each type perfects himself by becoming wholly righteous (Orot of Maran Ha-Rav Kook, p.84).

The Spies, like many other righteous men, did not behave in such an admirable fashion in their public lives.... The Zohar tells us about the special evil impulse reserved for the very (personally) righteous: "The Serpent nests in the highest mountain tops - i.e. the sages and the righteous" (Tikunei Zohar, end of Tikkun 13 and commentaries). This evil impulse feeds on spiritual motivation. Defense of Torah observance and the need to combat evil practices among those who build the Land become excuses for not supporting our national redemption. This is the evil impulse disguised as Torah observance. "And the great leaders of Israel will have to stand trial in the Heavenly Court for this matter. G-d will hold them responsible for humiliating His House" (Or Ha-Chaim Ha-Kadosh, Vayikra 25:25).

How could such great men commit such a sin? What were the spiritual and psychological elements which led them to do it?

An important factor in any sin is personal interest. When a man imagines that he will suffer some personal setback, it is difficult for him to remain objective. As Mesilat Yesharim teaches in chapter 11: "The heart may be deceived, and if we investigate, we discover that it had some slight unworthy desire for man is by nature weak and it is easy to deceive him into permitting things in which he has a personal interest." According to our sages, the Spies had reason to believe that once they entered the Promised Land, they would no longer be the leaders of the Nation, as they had been in Egypt and in the desert.

There is another explanation, that it was not personal wealth or honor which the spies sought, but rather spiritual wealth. They did not share the vision of

"Malchut Israel" [the Kingdom of Israel], as the only way to bring about the greatest sanctification of G-d's Name and the means by which G-d's rule in this world evidences itself, as we pray every day in "Aleinu". According to the Kuzari (2, 24), the Holy One rebukes the righteous of each generation, saying: "You righteous! Although the words of my Torah are dear to you, it is unseemly that you yearned for My Torah and not for My Kingship."

The Spies panicked at the idea of the Nation of Israel settling the Land. They worried that preoccupation with politics, military and economic affairs would estrange them from the Torah. It was the "Eidah," the Sanhedrin, who were responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Nation, who wanted to stone Moshe Rabeinu. They claimed Eretz Yisrael was "a Land that devours its inhabitants," that the temptations there would spoil their character (Chidushei Ha-Rim). This same claim reappears at the beginning of the Second Temple Period, when many of the great leaders of the Nation refused to leave Babylonia and go to Eretz Yisrael, because Jewish life in Babylonia was much more established and secure (see Kuzari 2:22-24). This is a negative phenomenon, even if motivated by spiritual considerations, as our Sages taught: "One should always try to live in Eretz Yisrael, even in a city where the majority are idol-worshippers, rather than live outside of Israel, even in a city where the majority are Jews (Ketubot 110b).

There is no doubt that it is difficult to sustain a spiritual existence while concurrently leading a public life, however, it is not impossible (see Rav Kook's introduction to Shabbat Ha-Aretz). Although the spies, "the heretic Tzadikim" (see Sotah 48b), warned: "We cannot go up against the people [of Canaan], for they are stronger than us" (Bemidbar 13:31), Calev and Yehoshua were adamant that "We shall surely go up and possess it, for we are certainly able to" - Even if Eretz Yisrael were in the sky, and G-d had commanded us to build ladders and climb up, we would be able to do it! (*ibid.* v. 30, and Rashi's commentary there). Eretz Yisrael is the ladder by which we reach heaven. It is precisely the "earthly" preoccupation with settling the Land which raises us to the highest spiritual heights, by virtue of the sanctity of the Promised Land.

from: torahweb@torahweb.org

to: weeklydt@torahweb.org

date: Jun 26, 2019, 9:37 AM

subject: Rabbi Daniel Stein - Organized Religion

torahweb.org

Rabbi Daniel Stein - Organized Religion

At the beginning of Parshas Shelach the Torah lists the names of the meraglim who descended to tour and survey Eretz Yisrael. "These are their names: For the tribe of Reuven, Shamua the son of Zakur. For the tribe of Shimon, Shaphat the son of Chori. For the tribe of Yehudah, Calev the son of Yephuneh. For the tribe of Yissachar, Yigal the son of Yoseph. For the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun etc." (Bamidbar 13:4-8). The first four tribes that are mentioned, Reuven, Shimon, Yehudah, and Yissachar follow the chronological order of their birth, however, the fifth, Ephraim, breaks the pattern which is not restored subsequently. This inconsistency prompts the Seforno to suggest that the Torah in fact listed the meraglim according to their own age and not according to the chronological birth of their respective shevatim. The Ramban disagrees and argues that the meraglim were not actually recorded according to their age at all but rather according to their degree of wisdom.

However, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (Emes Le'Yaakov) suggests that while the list was initially arranged chronologically, the order in which the latter eight shevatim and meraglim are mentioned is entirely haphazard without any compelling rhyme or reason. Rav Yaakov claims that historically, the meraglim approached Moshe chronologically in order to volunteer, however this systematic procession quickly became chaotic when the representative from Ephraim, Hoshea bin Nun, asserted himself ahead of his rightful spot in line. This is supported by the pasuk which states in connection with the

meraglim, "And all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men ahead of us'" (Devarim 1:22). Rashi explains that the meraglim pounced on Moshe all at once, in a disorganized frenzy, where those who were younger were pushing ahead of those who were older. For this reason, Moshe davened solely for the welfare of Hoshea by adding the letter yud to his name, since he alone had demonstrated a somewhat volatile disposition which had sparked the pandemonium.

Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman (Shaarei Orah) suggests that a critical component of the tragedy of the meraglim can be attributed to their eventual lack of order and organization. When things are cluttered, out of place, and in disarray, it prevents us from properly organizing our thoughts and priorities, and ultimately obstructs our ability to make thoughtful decisions and good choices. Sanctity and spirituality can only exist within the confines of a stable and systematically structured environment. The Alter from Kelm once traveled to visit his son while he was away at yeshiva. When the Alter arrived, he was unable to immediately locate his son in his dormitory, but when he saw that his bed was crisply set, his clothes creased and folded, and his closet neatly arranged, the Alter concluded that his son must be learning studiously and succeeding since orderliness is the hallmark of productivity and holiness.

The establishment of order and organization might even be one of the reasons Hashem created the world in the first place. The Gemara (Megillah 15b) states, "whoever attributes a statement to its originator has brought redemption to the world." While honesty in assigning credit is certainly praiseworthy, in what sense does this bring redemption to the world? The Maharal (Derech Chaim) explains that initially the world was in a state of muddled confusion, as the pasuk states, "v'ha'aretz haysa tohu vavohu - the land was in a state of chaos" (Breishis 1:2). It was precisely the process of creation that introduced order to the world by separating between light and darkness, the skies and the earth, the water and the dry land, and the day and the night. In the age of the internet, we can certainly appreciate the pernicious effects of obscurity and anonymity when issuing statements and offering opinions, and the vital need for accountability and responsibility. Therefore, citing sources and ascribing credit restores some semblance of order to the world, and in turn justifies and redeems the purpose for which the world was created.

At the beginning of Sefer Bamidbar the Torah spends an inordinate amount of time detailing the flags, formations, and the manner in which the Jewish people encamped and traveled around the Mishkan in the desert. Similarly, all of the procedures and protocols of the Mishkan itself, while stationary and in transit, were highly regimented and precisely delegated. The Maor Vashemesh, and later Rav Aharon Kotler (Mishnas Rebbi Ahron) suggest that the Torah is stressing that organization and order are indispensable prerequisites for achieving sanctity and cultivating a religiously inspired and productive atmosphere. In fact, the word "seder - order" is the root of the word "siddur" which we use to daven, because without seder it is impossible to connect with Hashem through tefillah.

Additionally, the night of Pesach, which is saturated with a multitude of mitzvos, revolves around "The Seder - The Order." Ostensibly, this is an unusual way of referring to a night which is punctuated by eating matzah and marror, drinking wine, and retelling the story of our exodus from Egypt. However, perhaps this is another indication and reminder that only through the organized medium of the seder, which is an orchestrated and coordinated effort of transmission from one generation to the next, can we deepen our relationship with Hashem. During the summer many of us will depart from our usual routine and schedule, but we should not allow this to create a disorderly and disorganized culture as it relates to our davening, learning, and performing mitzvos. We must do our best to maintain our flags and formation, and preserve as much as possible our regular sense of seder, which is so critical to our religious growth.

Copyright © 2019 by TorahWeb.org.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

www.matzav.com or www.torah.org/learning/drasha

Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Shlach - Chicken Yiddle

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of

Mordechai ben Chaya & Henya Chana Raizel bas Rochel Bayla.

"The sky is falling!" they shouted. Well not quite, but when the ten spies who went to examine the Land of Israel brought back tales of horrific stories of mighty and formidable enemies they threw a confident nation into sheer terror. It is almost inconceivable that a nation that saw a sea split and Egypt humbled would shirk in utter terror — because of reports of giants and fortified cities in their new country. The Medrash details the episode. Upon returning to the Jewish camp the ten spies dispersed amongst their own families and began to bemoan their fate. "Woe is to us!" they cried. "Our daughters will be taken captive, our sons murdered, and our possessions looted!"

Neighbor to neighbor, the tales spread, and within hours, the entire nation was in a rebellious uproar, ignoring the positive reports that Calev and Yehoshua brought back. They even besieged Moshe, demanding to return to Egypt.

The Torah details the Jews' mordant reaction to the malicious tales of gloom. Yet, it seems that it was not the tales of fortified cities or the sight of mutated-looking giant fruits or even the actual giants themselves that caused the Jews to lament. The way the story is related, the actual wailing and rebellion occurred only after an interesting detail. The spies described the giant men whom they encountered and the way they felt during that experience. "And there we saw the sons of giants; we felt in our own eyes like grasshoppers next to them" (Numbers 13:33). Immediately, the next verse tells us, "The entire assembly raised up their voices and wept that night, saying if only we had died in the land of Egypt or in the wilderness!" (Numbers 14:1-3) It seems that the final words of the spies, "we felt in our own eyes like grasshoppers next to them," set up this tragic and futile reaction. Why?

My brother, Rabbi Zvi Kamenetzky, a rebbe in Skokie Yeshiva, loves telling the following story:

Yankel, one of Warsaw's poorer folk, received a first-class train ticket from a wealthy cousin to visit him in Lodz. Yankel arrived at the station clutching his ticket tightly. He never took a train before and had no idea where to go. He spotted some well-dressed individuals and just knew he was not sitting with them. Then in the far corner of the waiting room he noticed a group of vagrants with packs on their shoulders, their eyes shifting back and forth. Yankel meandered toward them, figuring that their place was his. The first class passengers began to board but the vagrants still waited. All of a sudden, the whistle blew and the train began to move. The vagabonds quickly jumped aboard the baggage car, Yankel following in pursuit. He slithered into the dark car and lay with them underneath a pile of suitcases, still clutching his ticket in fear. He endured the bumps and heat of the baggage car and figured that such was his fate until the door of the baggage compartment flew open and a burly conductor flanked by two policemen entered. They began moving suitcases and bags until they spotted poor Yankel and some of his new-found friends cowering in a corner.

The large conductor loomed over them and asked with a sneer in his voice, "can I see your tickets?"

Yankel looked up from his coat to see the officers staring at him. He emerged from the group, shaking, and presented the sweat-infused ticket that he had been clutching ever so tightly during the entire ordeal.

The conductor looked at it carefully and then began to laugh hysterically. "Young man," he barked, "you have a first-class ticket! What are you doing here lying with these dregs in the baggage compartment? When you have a first-class ticket you ought act like a first-class passenger!"

The Jewish nation had no fear of giant fruit or giant men. They knew they had leaders that could overcome any obstacle. After all, Moshe led them across the Red Sea. Yehoshua and Chur helped defeat Amalek. But when they heard the ten spies – princes of the tribes — claim that they felt like insects they knew that they had no chance to conquer the land of Israel. They had nothing left to do but cry. Because if you are holding the first class ticket but act as if you are a itinerant then your ticket is worthless.

The giant fruit, fortified cities and powerful giants – all tiny acorns compared to the power of the Almighty – suddenly loomed large. And the sky began to fall on a self-pitying nation that was led by self-pitying leaders. And with the falling sky, fell the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of a generation that once yearned to dwell in the land of their forefathers. The Jewish nation was left to ponder that message for 40 years in the desert and perhaps thousands of years in the Diaspora.

That is what happens when mighty princes with first-class tickets to paradise think that they are tiny grasshoppers holding tickets to nowhere.

This week's drasha is dedicated In honor of the birth of Geoffrey Handelman — Yehudah Chaim HaCohen, to Carol and Steve Handelman And Joel Brian –Yaakov Binyamin — Fisch, to Charles and Paula Fisch By the Proud Grandparents Ruth & Lionel Fisch

Good Shabbos

Rabbi M. Kamenetzky is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

Text Copyright © 1997 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc.

Drasha © 2019 by Torah.org.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Torah in Action /Shema Yisrael <parsha@torahinaction.com>

subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Shelach

פרשת שלח תשל"ט

ייעלו בנגב ויבא עד חברון

They went up through the desert, and he came to Chevron. (13:22)

Chazal (Sotah 34b) note the change in the text of the pasuk. They (all the meraglim) went up through the desert, but only one (“and he”) went to Chevron. Calev ben Yefuneh went to daven at the graves of the Avos, Patriarchs, that he not fall prey to the counsel of the (other) spies.

Concerning Yehoshua, Moshe Rabbeinu had already davened for his (spiritual) safety. Apparently, the other spies felt neither an urge nor a need to daven, probably because they were so sure of themselves that they were doing the right thing. It was up to them to prevent Klal Yisrael from entering the Land. Otherwise, they would lose their exalted positions. How quickly the high and mighty fall when they fear a loss of kavod, honor! What about Yehoshua? True, Moshe blessed him, but what about his personal hishtadlus, endeavoring? Perhaps he felt that if he went to Chevron to pray as Calev did, it might appear that he was not fully relying on his Rebbe's brachah, blessing. Last, why did Moshe daven for Yehoshua and ignore the fact that Calev also required a blessing? Calev was left to fend for himself, while Yehoshua's was provided for him. It does seem strange.

Targum Yonasan explains that Moshe knew that Yehoshua was humble, and, as a result, he might not feel confident enough to stand up to the rest of the spies. In his humility, he might begin to believe that ten such great and righteous men could not be wrong. After all, who was he to disagree with them? Thus, he might cave in and join the majority of the ten spies who did not agree with him and had expressed such negativity about the Land. Calev, however, was different. Ruach acheres, imo; “(he had a) different spirit with him” (ibid 14:24). The Commentators claim this ruach acheres was none other than his wife, Miriam HaNeviah. Calev carried with him the ruach, spirit, and attitude of his wife. Calev was clearly a great man, a tzaddik in his own right, an individual who stood up to an entire Klal Yisrael and quieted them down that night of bitter weeping. It was still not enough for him to

withstand the negativity of the other meraglim. He needed his wife's support. (What a powerful lesson for us all!)

In what area did Miriam's support manifest itself? Horav Tzvi Kushelevsky, Shlita, notes that Miriam was no stranger to standing up for what was right – even if it meant crossing and perhaps becoming the victim of a world dictator's ire. Pharaoh wanted the Jewish babies dead. Miriam and her mother “disagreed.” They were not going to listen to him. One might contend that Miriam had the support of her mother, Yocheved. Two are far stronger than one. This might be true, but, when she stood by her baby brother's basket in the Nile, she was alone in her defiance of Pharaoh. She did not have to do this. She acted alone; she did what was right; she stood guard by the basket containing the future leader of Klal Yisrael. When the people sinned with the Golden Calf, she davened for their survival. This was despite the fact that her son, Chur, had fallen victim to their murderous treachery. Her personal grief aside, Klal Yisrael must survive. Despite this, when Korach, the demagogue, stood up and led a mutinous rebellion against Moshe's authority, she did not hesitate to criticize him. Wrong is wrong. It cannot be whitewashed. The future of Klal Yisrael was at stake. It was not a time for civility and nicety. Moshe realized this, and he was convinced that Miriam's attitude would have a positive influence on his brother-in-law, Calev. He needed to daven only for Yehoshua.

Perhaps we may add another aspect to the appreciation of Miriam's positive effect on Calev. While it is true that Miriam stood up for what was right and proper, it was usually against someone evil. In contrast, Calev would have to overcome the influence of ten tzaddikim who went wrong. When they left Moshe's camp in the desert, they were all anashim, men of stature. It was when they returned that they became the infamous meraglim. It would take much more than defying Pharaoh to imbue Calev with the courage and spiritual mettle to take on these (self) righteous leaders and not fall prey to their ability to convince him otherwise. If they were able to bring an entire nation to tears for no warranted reason, they could conceivably convince Calev to join forces with them to take Moshe down.

Miriam, however, had proven herself early on when she stood up against Amram, her father, when he divorced Yocheved. She argued that what he was doing was worse for the Jewish People than Pharaoh's decree. The evil despot wanted to murder Jewish boys, while Amram's decree that all men divorce their wives, so that they would not produce children whom Pharaoh could kill, would deprive the Jewish people of both male and female offspring. Miriam saw with such clarity of vision, her conviction and commitment so strong, that she debated with the gadol hador, the leader of the generation. (This does not mean that impugning religious activity is permissible. It is most definitely not, but Miriam was contending with her own father.) Miriam's actions provided a vital lesson for Calev, that when something is wrong – one argues. We do not, however, allow anyone to dispute the supreme authority of the Torah (which was represented by Moshe) – regardless of one's stature. This is not debatable.

יַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֵרוֹתָם... וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת ד'

They shall make themselves tzitzis on the corners of their garments... that you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem.

(15:38,39)

This pasuk reveals the root of the mitzvah of tzitzis. According to the Sefer HaChinuch men wear tzitzis, so that they will always remember all of Hashem's mitzvos. What better reminder than carrying the seal of Hashem on the clothes that we wear? The word tzitzis alludes to the taryag, 613, mitzvos, when one tallies the numerical equivalent of the letters combined with the eight strings of the fringes and their five knots. The Chinuch goes on to explain that the tzitzis allude (esoterically) to the verity that the soul and body of a man all belong to Hashem. He is their Creator. Thus, He can do whatever He wants with His creation. Tzitzis embodies all of the mitzvos and serves as their representative. The total of 613 is equivalent, not only to the 248 positive and 365 prohibitive mitzvos of the Torah, but it also equals the combined total of the 365 days of the solar year and 248 limbs and

organs of the body. These numbers teach us an important lesson: Torah must be a part of every day of the year, in every limb of our body, in every shred of our garment. Judaism is neither a part time occupation nor a spectator religion. It is a religion of total involvement. The mitzvos link us with Hashem, and, it is only through our performance of His mitzvos that we can hope to achieve the kedushah, sanctity, that Hashem expects of us.

Perhaps this is why the parshah closed with the mitzvah of tzitzis, the mitzvah which enjoins us to surround ourselves with mitzvos, to encompass our lives with Hashem. Certainly, anyone who reads the account of the meraglim, spies, is troubled: How could this happen? How could anashim, tzaddikim, righteous Jews, fall to such a nadir, to slander Eretz Yisrael and, by extension, Hashem Yisborach? Veritably, this is not the first time that the spiritually exalted and mighty plummeted suddenly to the depths of spiritual oblivion. The Asafsuf that were overcome with taavah, desire, and complained, were no ordinary rabble rousers. According to one statement in the Midrash Tanchuma, they were members of the Sanhedrin, who were overcome with a burning desire to eat meat. Seems unreal – but true. These were the Elders, who had accompanied Moshe Rabbeinu to Har Sinai. What happened?

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, derives from here that the sudden transition from the aura of Har Sinai and receiving the Torah, from sitting ensconced in sanctity in the Machane Shechinah, Camp of the Divine, to entering into a world of secularism, materialism, hedonism, can have that effect. We do not realize the protective nature of a Torah environment until we leave it. Our greatest protection against spiritual disaster is the awareness that it is dangerous “out there” and that we require protection. The best protection is to take the Torah with us. I think we can compare this to flying on a plane that suddenly changes altitude, causing an oxygen imbalance. Immediately, the oxygen descends from above. The passengers all grab oxygen cups and begin to breathe normally. Imagine, if there would not be oxygen on board. The passengers would not survive to talk about it.

Tzitzis saves. There is a powerful segulah, protection/remedy. A positive change in one’s destiny is effected through the wearing of tzitzis. (As in all segulos, it is the kavanah, intention, and devotion that accompanies the segulah that elevates it.) One who wears tzitzis is acutely aware (or should be) that his body and soul belong to Hashem. No one can cause him harm without Hashem’s permission. One who is wrapped in tzitzis, who realizes that he is surrounded by holiness, that G-d is with him, is likewise protected from spiritual downfall. There are many stories that attest to this truth. I have selected one which inspired me, because it drives home the idea by which every Jew should live: Hashem controls our lives and destiny.

A student in one of Eretz Yisrael’s prominent yeshivos became seriously ill. After meeting with a number of physicians, the dread diagnosis came in: he would have to undergo a few rounds of chemotherapy as an outpatient. When he arrived at the clinic to begin his therapy, he was informed by the nurse that he must change his clothes and don sterile garments provided by the clinic. He was aware of the restriction concerning sterile garments, which is why (knowing that the clinic does not supply sterile tzitzis) he washed his tzitzis the night before and brought a clean pair with him. The nurse took one look at his arba kanfos/tzitzis garment, and she said, “No. Absolutely not.” He would have to remove his tzitzis before undergoing chemo. He attempted to explain to her that his tzitzis had just been washed and had been kept sterile, but it made no difference. She was adamant: he either would remove his tzitzis, or he was not receiving chemo. The bachur was just as obstinate as the nurse. He sat in the hallway, just outside of the room where the chemo was administered and refused to budge. No tzitzis – no chemo.

Three hours later, one of the oncologists walked by and, upon noticing the young yeshivah student sitting in the waiting room, asked, “What brings you here?” The bachur explained his predicament. The doctor listened and decided to pay a visit to the nurse to see if he could resolve the problem. A short while later, the doctor came out and was ashen-faced as if he himself had endured a trauma of some sort. The bachur, seeing that the doctor was

visibly shaken, asked, “Is something wrong?” The doctor looked at the student and replied, “Something is very wrong, but first go for your chemotherapy treatment, and, when you are done, I will speak to you. Do not be concerned with the nurse. I took care of everything.”

The bachur took his treatment – tzitzis and all – and when he finished, he was met by the doctor whose red eyes indicated that he had been crying. “I am a Yehudi,” the doctor began. “As you can see, I am not yet observant. Today, however, I have been witness to a phenomenon about which I have heard, but never personally have seen in action – until today. When I entered the therapy suite to speak to the nurse on your behalf, I glanced at the medicine “cocktail” they were giving you to treat your specific disease. I was shocked beyond belief: The nurse had egregiously erred and had prepared a mixture, which, in your present condition, could have possibly killed you! It was a mistake. It could happen, given the various circumstances. Your tzitzis saved you.”

As a postscript to the story, the bachur underwent therapy and, Baruch Hashem, went into remission. He is today married with a family – to the surprise of his doctors. Hashem is the Rofeh Cholim, Healer of the sick.

וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֵת כָּל מִצְוֹת ד'

That you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem. (15:39)

The Mishnah Berurah writes that one who places his tzitzis, fringes, over his eyes during the recital of U're'isem osam, “That you may see it” (during Shema Yisrael) will benefit from the segulah, protective omen, so that his vision will not be impaired. In seeking an explanation for this statement, Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, quotes the Chida, zl, who offers a rationale for the makah, plague, of choshech, darkness. Yaakov Avinu, Yosef and, by extension, the Jewish People were the source of great light to their country. The Egyptians, when it suited them, quickly forgot the Jews. Hashem punished them middah k'neged middah, measure for measure, by creating the makah of choshech. Shochach, forgetting, begot choshech, darkness.

This, explains Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, is quite possibly the reason that the eyes of the individual who passes the tzitzis (which reminds him of Hashem) over his eyes will never be dimmed. He indicates by his actions that he remembers the Almighty, that yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt, is before him all of the time. He does not act as the Egyptians did. He does not forget Hashem. Likewise, Hashem remembers him.

Va'ani Tefillah

את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח – Es Tzemach David Avdecha meheirah satzmiach. May You speedily cause the outgrowth of David, Your servant, to sprout forth.

In his commentary to Tefillah, Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, explains how the last seven brachos, blessings, of the middle part of Shemoneh Esrai correspond sequentially to the first six, ie. Atah chonen – teka b'shofar, Bonei Yerushalayim – Goeil Yisrael. Accordingly, the brachah, es tzemach, which is a brachah for Moshiach’s arrival, corresponds with refaeinu, the brachah for healing. Moshiach is unquestionably the ultimate refuah for what ails Klal Yisrael during its long and bitter exile. Our 2,000 year galus, exile, has made us sick. When one lives in an environment that is filled with people that are sick, he is exposed to ailments for which his immune system must work overtime. Our exile has placed us in countries and environments that are spiritually and morally antithetical to Torah. Rav Schwab points out that a number of these ailments have infected us. For example, hatred. In the world at large, hatred is quite common. We have sadly absorbed this illness which has manifested itself in various venues.

Klal Yisrael had three distinguishing characteristics. First, Baishanim, embarrassment; this is a trait that comes into play in the area of tznus, personal modesty and decency. Our sense of bushah – the areas of dress code, social relationships and lifestyle – has definitely negatively changed. Second, Rachamanim, compassion. The world at large has proven that cruelty is not a terrible trait. Can we assert that we have not been adversely affected by the

cruelty about which we read and witness? The last trait, gomlei chassadim, performing acts of kindness, remains intact despite our exposure to a world where kindness is selective. We declare, “We need Moshiach.” It is true; we really need him before the diseases that we have contracted harm us irreparably.

Sponsored by The Klahr Family (New York)

In loving memory of our grandparents Phillip and Lillian Finger

who were long-time friends and family of the Hebrew Academy.

לענן ר' זלמן פישל בן חנינא הלוי עה - מרת עטל לאה בת ר' ישעי-ה הלוי עה ת.ג.צ.ב.ה.

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved

prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff <ykaganoff@gmail.com>

to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com

Taking Care of the Ill -- The Mitzvah of Bikur Cholim

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Those of us living in Eretz Yisroel, are reading parshas Korach this week, from which the Gemara cites a source for the mitzvah of bikur cholim. Those living in chutz la'aretz, can certainly find ample reason to study the laws of bikur cholim this week.

Question #1: “Rabbi,” asked Mr. Greenberg, “My neighbor, Mrs. Friedman, is having an operation. Is it appropriate for me to visit her?”

Question #2: Does Dr. Strauss fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim when he makes his hospital rounds?

Question #3: “My sister-in-law is hospitalized for a few days for a minor procedure. I should really visit her, but I just can’t find the time. Is it halachically sufficient for me to call her?”

Based on a pasuk in parshas Korach, the Gemara (Nedarim 39b) teaches: “There is an allusion to the mitzvah of bikur cholim in the Torah: When Moshe declares, ‘If these people (Korach’s party) will die like most people do, and the destiny of most people will happen to them, then Hashem did not send me.’ How do we see an allusion to the mitzvah of bikur cholim in the pasuk? Moshe declared: If these people will die like most people do – if they will become ill and bedridden and people will come to inquire about their needs (in other words, illness provides an opportunity for people to fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim) – then people will say ‘Hashem did not send me.’” Thus, the Gemara cites this week’s parsha as one of the sources in the Torah for the mitzvah of bikur cholim since Moshe specifically asked that Korach and his party not die in the manner that most people, where this is a chance to achieve this important mitzvah. Another allusion to bikur cholim is in the beginning of Parshas Vayeira, where it says that Hashem visited Avraham Avinu three days after his Bris Milah. Rashi points out that Hashem was performing bikur cholim, visiting and providing care for the ill. In the same way, by taking care of the ill, we fulfill the mitzvah of emulating Hashem’s ways, in addition to the special mitzvah of bikur cholim (Sotah 14a). Thus, physicians, nurses or other medical professionals should have in mind before every visit or appointment that they are performing two mitzvos, one of emulating Hashem, and the other of bikur cholim. Since we rule that mitzvos tzerichos kavanah, to fulfill a mitzvah requires being cognizant of that fact, any medical professional gains much merit by being aware of this every day and all day.

Every community should have an organization devoted to the needs of the sick, and it is a tremendous merit to be involved in organizing and participating in such a wonderful chesed project (Ahavas Chesed 3:3).

The Kli Yakar (Bamidbar 16:29) offers an additional reason for fulfilling bikur cholim - to benefit the visitor. Seeing someone ill influences the visitor to think about the importance of doing teshuvah. And this influence provides extra merit for the sick person, since he caused someone else to do teshuvah!

The Gemara (Nedarim 40a) reports that when one of Rabbi Akiva’s disciples was ill, no one came to check his welfare. Then Rabbi Akiva entered his dwelling, cleaned it and sprinkled water on the floor (to prevent dust from rising), and the student exclaimed, “Rabbi Akiva, you have brought me back to life!” After this experience, Rabbi Akiva taught that someone who visits the ill is considered to have saved his life!

WHY “BIKUR” CHOLIM?

What does bikur cholim mean?

It is worth noting that although “bikur” means “visit” in modern Hebrew, the original meaning of “bikur” is not “visit” but “checking.” In other words, the actual mitzvah of bikur cholim is to check which of the sick person’s needs have not been attended to (Toras HaAdam).

There are two main aspects of this mitzvah:

I. Taking care of the physical and emotional needs of someone who is ill.

II. Praying for the recovery of the ill person (Toras HaAdam, based on Nedarim 40a).

I. TAKING CARE OF PHYSICAL NEEDS

In addition to raising the sick person’s spirits by showing concern, the visitor should also ensure that the physical, financial, and medical needs of the ill person are properly being attended to, as well as other logistical concerns that may be troubling him/her.

Often, well-meaning people make the effort to visit the sick, but fail to fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim properly, because they fail to take care of the choleh’s needs (Gesher HaChayim).

Always cheer up the choleh (Gesher HaChayim). This is included in attending to his emotional needs.

The visit is to benefit the choleh. In most circumstances, a visit should be short and not tire out or be uncomfortable for the ill person. Sometimes the sick person wants to rest, but feels obligated to converse with a visitor (Aruch HaShulchan, Yoreh Deah 335:4).

In such cases, visitors think they are performing a mitzvah, while, unfortunately, they are actually doing the opposite. It is important to remember that the entire focus of bikur cholim is on the sick person’s needs and not on the visitor’s desire to feel noble or important. I remember my mother, a”h, having such guests during one of her hospital stays; although she kept hinting that she wanted to rest, they didn’t catch on and stayed put. They thought they were performing a kind deed, while, in reality, they were harming a sick person who desperately needed to rest.

OVERNIGHT CARE

One of the greatest acts of chesed is to stay overnight with a choleh (Aruch HaShulchan, Yoreh Deah 335:3; Shu”t Tzitz Eliezer, Volume 5, Ramat Rachel, #4). A similar act of bikur cholim and true chesed is to stay overnight with a hospitalized child to enable parents to get some proper sleep and keep their family’s life in order.

A person can fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim even a hundred times a day (Nedarim 39b). If one frequently pops one’s head into one’s sick child’s bedroom to see how the child is doing, or periodically drops in to visit a shut-in, one fulfills a separate mitzvah each time, so long as it does not become burdensome to the choleh. Similarly, a nurse fulfills the mitzvah of bikur cholim each time he/she checks on a patient, and, therefore, she should have intent to do this for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah.

This applies even if the nurse is paid, because the proscription against being paid to do a mitzvah applies only to the mitzvah’s minimum requirement. Once one does more than this minimum, one can be paid for the extra time one spends. The same certainly applies to someone paid to stay overnight with a sick patient.

IS THERE AN OPTIMUM TIME OF DAY TO VISIT?

The Gemara states that one should not visit a sick person during the first quarter of the day, since one usually looks healthier in the morning and the visitor may not be motivated to pray on behalf of the ill person. One should also not visit a sick person at the end of the day, when he looks much sicker and one might give up hope. Therefore, one should visit an ill person during the middle part of the day (see Nedarim 40a, and Ahavas Chesed 3:3). Rambam offers a different reason for this halacha, explaining that at other times of the day, visitors might interfere with the attendants and medical personnel who are taking care of the choleh (Hilchos Aveil 14:5).

Thus, the ideal time for visiting an ill person is in the middle of the day, unless he is receiving medical treatment at that time.

Despite the above, the custom is to visit the ill person, regardless of the time of the day. Why is this so? The Aruch HaShulchan (Yoreh Deah 335:8) explains that the Gemara’s visiting times are advisory rather than obligatory. The Gemara is saying that one should visit the ill person at the time most beneficial for his care, which is usually the afternoon, either because this does not interfere with medical care or because it is the best time to detect the patient’s medical status. However, this is only advice and can be tempered by other practical concerns.

WHAT IF THE ILL PERSON IS RECEIVING SUBSTANDARD CARE?

In this instance, one should try to upgrade the choleh’s care without agitating him in the process (Gesher HaChayim).

WHOM TO VISIT FIRST

Usually, it is a greater mitzvah to visit a poor choleh than a wealthy one. This is because there is often no one else to care for the poor person’s needs (Sefer Chassidim #361). Additionally, he may need more help because of his lack of finances, and he is more likely to be in financial distress because of his inability to work (Ahavas Chesed 3:3). If two people need the same amount of care and one of them is a talmid chacham, the talmid chacham should be attended to first (Sefer Chassidim #361). If the talmid chacham is being attended to adequately and the other person is not, one should first take care of the other person (Sefer Chassidim #361).

CROSS-GENDER VISITING

Should a man pay a hospital visit to a female non-relative, or vice versa?

The halacha states that a man may attend to another man who is suffering from an intestinal disorder, but not to a woman suffering from such a problem, whereas a woman may attend to either a man or a woman suffering from an intestinal disorder (Mesechta Sofrim Chapter 12). This implies that one may attend to the needs of the opposite gender in all other medical situations (Shach, Yoreh Deah 335:9; Birkei Yosef, Yoreh Deah 335:4; Aruch HaShulchan, Yoreh Deah 335:11 and Shu't Zakan Aharon 2:76).

There is a famous story of Rav Aryeh Levin, the tzaddik of Yerushalayim. He was once concerned that a certain widow who had been told not to fast on Yom Kippur would disobey orders, he personally visited her on Yom Kippur and boiled water for a cup of tea to ensure that she drank. In this way, he fulfilled the mitzvah of bikur cholim on Yom Kippur in a unique way (A Tzaddik in Our Time).

However, some halachic authorities distinguish between attending to a sick person's needs, and visiting, contending that although a woman may usually provide a man's nursing needs and vice versa, there is no requirement for a woman to visit an ill man (Shu't Tzitz Eliezer, Volume 5, Ramat Rachel, and Zichron Meir pg. 71 footnote 24 quoting Shu't Vayaan Avrohom, Yoreh Deah #25 and others). Other authorities contend that when one can assume that the woman's medical needs are provided, a man should not visit her, because of tzniyus concerns (Shu't Chelkas Yaakov 3:38:3; Shu't Tzitz Eliezer, Volume 5, Ramat Rachel, #16). Instead, the man should inquire about her welfare and pray for her. I suggest asking your rav or posek for direction in these situations.

II. PRAYING FOR THE ILL

The Beis Yosef (Yoreh Deah 335) writes, "It is a great mitzvah to visit the ill, since this causes the visitor to pray on the sick person's behalf, which revitalizes him.

Furthermore, since the visitor sees the ill person, the visitor checks to see what the ill person needs." We see that Beis Yosef considers praying for the ill an even greater part of the mitzvah than attending to his needs, since he first mentions praying and then refers to attending to the other needs as "furthermore."

Someone who visits a sick person without praying for his recovery fails to fulfill all the requirements of the mitzvah (Toras HaAdam; Rama 335:4). Therefore, physicians, nurses, and aides who perform bikur cholim daily should accustom themselves to pray for their sick patients, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim. A simple method of accomplishing this is to discreetly recite a quick prayer (such as "Hashem, please heal this person among the other ill Jewish people [b'soch she'ar cholei yisrael]") as one leaves the person's room. (A doctor in his office can recite the same quick prayer.)

MUST ONE PRAY FOR A SICK PERSON BY NAME?

When praying in a sick person's presence, one does not need to mention his name, and one may recite the prayer in any language. The Gemara explains that this is because the Shechinah, the Divine presence, rests above the choleh's head (Shabbos 12b). However, when the ill person is not present, one should pray specifically in Hebrew and should mention the person's name (Toras HaAdam; Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 335:5). If one cannot pray in Hebrew, one may do so in English or any other language except Aramaic (see Taz, Yoreh Deah 335:4).

[Incidentally, since the Shechinah is in the choleh's presence, visitors should act in a dignified manner (Shabbos 12b; Shl"ta). This includes both their behavior and their mode of dress.]

Why must one pray in Hebrew when the ill person is not present? Rashi explains that in such a case, when one prays for an individual, angels have to transport the prayer to the Divine presence (the Shechinah) – these angels transport only prayers recited in Hebrew and not those recited in Aramaic (Rashi, Shabbos 12b s.v. Deshechinah). However, when praying in the presence of the sick person, one may pray in any language, since the Shechinah is nearby and the prayer does not require the angels to transport it on high (Shabbos 12b).

MAY ONE PRAY IN ENGLISH FOR THE ILL?

This explains the difference between Hebrew and Aramaic. What about other languages? Do the angels "transport" prayer recited in a different language?

To answer this question, we must first explain why angels do not transport Aramaic prayers?

The halachic authorities dispute why the angels do not convey prayers recited in Aramaic. Some contend that angels communicate only in Hebrew and, furthermore, only convey a prayer that they understand (Tosafos, Shabbos 12b s.v. She'ayn). According to this approach, the angels convey only Hebrew prayers. However, other authorities contend that the angels do not convey Aramaic prayers because they view this language as corrupted Hebrew and not a real language (Rosh, Berachos 2:2). Similarly, the angels will not convey a prayer recited in slang or expressed in an undignified way. According to the latter opinion, the angels will convey a prayer recited in any proper language, and one may pray in English for an ill person even if he is not present.

The Shulchan Aruch quotes both opinions, but considers the first opinion to be the primary approach (Orach Chayim 101:4). However, in Yoreh Deah 335:5, the Shulchan Aruch omits the second opinion completely. The commentaries on the Shulchan Aruch raise this point, and conclude that the Shulchan Aruch felt that praying for an ill person is such a serious matter that one should certainly follow the more stringent approach and pray only in Hebrew when the choleh is not present (Taz, Yoreh Deah 335:4).

Therefore, one should not pray for an individual sick person's needs in any language other than Hebrew. Only if one is unable to pray in Hebrew, may one rely on the second opinion and pray in any language other than Aramaic.

DOES ONE FULFILL BIKUR CHOLIM OVER THE TELEPHONE?

To answer this question, let us review the reasons for this mitzvah and see if a telephone call fulfills them. One reason to visit the ill is to see if they have any needs that are not being attended to. Although a phone call might discover this, being physically present at the bedside is usually a better method of ascertaining what is needed. The second reason one visits the ill is to motivate the visitor to pray on their behalf. Again, although one may be motivated by a phone call, it is rarely as effective as a visit. Furthermore, although a phone call can cheer up the choleh and make him feel important, a personal visit accomplishes this far more effectively. Therefore, most aspects of this mitzvah require a personal visit. However, in cases where one cannot actually visit the choleh, for example, when a visit is uncomfortable for the patient or unwanted, one should call (Shu't Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:223; Shu't Chelkas Yaakov 2:128). Some authorities contend that it is better for a man to call, rather than visit, a hospitalized or bed-ridden woman who is not a relative, since it is difficult for an ill person to maintain the appropriate level of tzniyus (Chelkas Yaakov 3:38:3).

ALWAYS PRAY FOR GOOD HEALTH

A healthy person should daven for continuing good health, because it is far easier to pray that one remain healthy than to pray for a cure after one is already ill. This is because a healthy person remains well so long as no bad judgment is brought against him in the heavenly tribunal, whereas an ill person needs zechuyos to recover. This latter instance is not desirable for two reasons -- first, the choleh may not have sufficient zechuyos, and second, even if he does, he will lose some of his zechuyos in order to get well.

Before taking medicine or undergoing other medical treatment one should recite a short prayer: "May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d, that this treatment will heal, for You are a true Healer" (Magen Avraham 230:6; Mishnah Berurah 230:6, based on Berachos 60a).

People who fulfill the mitzvah of bikur cholim are promised tremendous reward in Olam Haba, in addition to many rewards in this world (Shabbos 127a). Someone who fulfills the mitzvah of bikur cholim properly is considered as if he saved people's lives and is rewarded by being spared any severe punishment (Nedarim 40a).

May Hashem send refuah shleimah to all the cholim of Klal Yisrael!

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Weekly Parsha SHLACH

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

Much has been written and taught regarding the motives of the leaders of Israel, those who Moshe sent to spy out the land of Israel in advance of the Jewish people entering their homeland. After all the explanations, it remains a baffling mystery as to how such great people could have been so wrong on such an important issue. Just as they were able to convince an entire generation to believe as they did, we have found that over the centuries of human history, there have been many instances of such types of situations. Sometimes these matters are treated as being a symptom of mass hysteria. In the Middle Ages there were many such instances when people were led to believe in the false narratives of leaders, some of whom were even sincere in spreading these narratives. There was a derisive expression in Yiddish that stated that "the masses of the general public are always fools and ignoramuses." This is a rather harsh assessment and in a democratic society such as ours, which is allegedly run by and subject to the will of the masses, it does not register favorably in our ears.

Though that assessment of public opinion and belief may be too broad, there is certainly more than a kernel of truth in that saying. And the reaction of the Jewish people to the false narrative stated by the spies who visited Israel, serves as a bitter and eternal reminder of human folly. Such instances are not subject to rational explanation, but they are omnipresent throughout the story of human existence on this planet.

The question always arises as to how to prevent such suicidal mistakes from occurring in Jewish society. Over the past century masses of Jews allowed themselves to be persuaded by false narratives, as was the case with the spies in the desert, resulting in

death and disaster. Millions of Jews followed the red flag of Marxism, in all its various forms, only to be devoured by the very beast that they had nurtured.

Others searched for new forms of Judaism they felt would be relevant to their children and to future generations. After all we were in a different world and a different society than that of our ancestors. The old Judaism would somehow prove to be irrelevant and doomed. But just the opposite has seemingly occurred. While all the forms of new, modern and progressive Judaism are teetering on the verge of extinction, the old irrelevant Judaism has revitalized itself and inspired generations with its eternal truths and values granted at Mount Sinai.

The Jewish people traditionally are hasty people. New ideas capture them and to a certain extent, cause a type of mass hysteria that blindsides them. Yet, it is also within our nature, by tradition and history, to be a skeptical people. We should never lose that healthy skepticism when dealing with issues, problems and the possibility of solutions in our current society.

Shabbat shalom

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>
reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org
date: Jun 27, 2019, 10:29 PM
subject: Orthodox Belief; Fear of Freedom; Does it Pay to Be Good?
You Can't Always Get What You Want

Rabbi Jack Abramowitz

June 24, 2019

The Rolling Stones famously sing:

You can't always get what you want

You can't always get what you want

You can't always get what you want

I have a joke for you on that subject. (Warning: There may be a moral at the end.)

At the turn of the 20th century, recent immigrant Shloimie Fleischer was looking for a job. He heard that the Third Street Synagogue was looking to hire a shammes (attendant), so he decided to apply.

At the interview, Shloimie was greeted by the gabbai who asked him to write his name and address on a piece of paper."

"I'm sorry," Shloimie said with embarrassment, "but I don't know how to read and write."

"Mr. Fleischer," the gabbai replied with condescension, "the Third Street Synagogue is a very prestigious congregation. I'm afraid it just wouldn't do for us to employ a shammes who was... illiterate." Shloimie left, discouraged.

Lacking options, he started a little pushcart business, selling needles and thread, and other little sundries. Customers liked him and he took pride in his merchandise, so soon he was able to open a little shop. That shop was soon replaced by a five and dime, which in turn was replaced by a department store. By the end of the decade, Shloimie had a chain of department stores throughout the tri-state area.

Looking to expand his operations into New England, Shloimie went to his local bank to arrange a loan.

"Certainly, Mr. Fleischer!" the bank officer squealed with delight. "Your reputation precedes you. Just sign here." Shloimie obliged by making an X on the loan application.

"An X?" the banker noticed with surprise. "You're such a wealthy and successful businessman, Mr. Fleischer! Can you imagine what you could have been if you could read and write?"

"I know exactly what I would have been," Shloimie responded. "The shammes at the Third Street Synagogue!"

This joke contains an important lesson about emunah. (You were warned that there might be a moral!) Our fictional immigrant wanted the shammes job, and he was disappointed not to receive it. (You can't always get what you want.) God certainly could have arranged things so that the gabbai would have hired him but God knew that this wasn't the path meant for Shloimie Fleischer. That path was intended for someone else.

Along these lines is the famous story of Rabbi Akiva. The Talmud in Brachos (60b) recounts how the Sage was once traveling with a rooster, a donkey and a lamp. Refused lodging in the village, he slept in the woods, where wild animals killed the rooster and the donkey, and the wind blew out his lamp. Rabbi Akiva's response was to shrug and say, "All that God does is for the best." It wasn't until the next morning that Rabbi Akiva learned that bandits had raided the village during the night. Had he been granted lodging, or had his possessions revealed his location, he would have been killed. Rabbi Akiva had no idea why this particular course of action was for his benefit (You can't always get what you want) but he had no doubt that it was.

Two, three years ago, I was quite the gym rat, working my experiences with CrossFit and marathons into my articles. Last summer, I wrote a long series on lessons I learned

from my back surgery. Now, a year later, I still have a nasty list to one side and I walk distances of any real length with the assistance of a cane. When people ask about my recovery, I tell them that maybe I'll improve some more and maybe this is as good as I'll get but either way, I'm calling it a win. This surprises some people, who I guess expect me to be bitter or dissatisfied rather than generally positive. What can I say? Would I rather be lifting weights than hobbling around? Sure. But as we've mentioned, You can't always get what you want. We can accept that what we're given is right for us or we can be bitter about it. Either way, you don't have the thing you wanted but in the latter scenario you have the added disadvantage of walking around in a bad mood. That's no help. The truly wealthy person is the one who is satisfied with what he has in life (Avos 4:1).

Yes, the Rolling Stones do indeed sing:

You can't always get what you want

You can't always get what you want

You can't always get what you want

That chorus, however, has two more lines:

But if you try sometime, you might find

You get what you need.

We know that we don't always get what we want in life; that reality is hammered home time and time again. But if we open our eyes and look around us, if we examine the paths of our lives, and if we trust that God always places us where we're supposed to be, we just might find we get what we need.

Rabbi Jack Abramowitz is Torah Content Editor at the Orthodox Union. He is the author of six books, including The Tzniyus Book and The Taryag Companion. His latest work, The God Book, is available from OU Press as well as on Amazon.