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subject: **Reb Yeruchem - How To Guarantee Failure In Fighting The Yetzer Hora** Parshas Shlach
How To Guarantee Failure In Fighting The Yetzer Hora
Send, for yourself, men and let them spy out the Land[2]
Rashi explains the strange hesitation in lecha/for yourself:
“I am not commanding you to do so. If you wish – send them. Because the Jews came and said ‘Let’s send people [to examine the Land],’ Moshe consulted with the Shechinah. Hashem responded: ‘I told them that the Land was good...By their lives, I will give them space for error in regard to the Spies. In this way, they will not inherit the Land.’”

Where might we find this “space” for error? I believe that it is found where HKBH withdraws the assistance that he ordinarily offers a person to resist sinning. As the gemara

states,[3] “A person’s yetzer hora grows strong against him each day, and wishes to destroy him. Without Hashem’s help, he cannot prevail against it.”

This is an important principle. The space for error does not, chas v’shalom, mean that Hashem creates snares to trap him. (This should be evident in Chazal’s phraseology, when they say[4] that one who comes to purify himself is “assisted” by Heaven; for the one who comes to defile himself, they “create an opening.” Note that the would-be evildoer is not “assisted” like the proper person, but only given an opening.) It simply means that Hashem no longer offers His help to keep the person away from aveirah.

This assistance is available even to non-Jews. Hashem has mercy on them, and creates obstacles for them on the path to wrongdoing. When Bilaam travelled with the intent of doing Balak’s bidding, an angel appeared in the roadway to block the way.[5] Rashi explains that the traffic-blocker was an angel of mercy, attempting to keep Bilaam from sinning.

One of the general ways in which Hashem assists us in not sinning is in creating a sense of embarrassment and shame. We would do so many more aveiros if that sense of shame would be eliminated – if we never worried about what others think about us.

The entire episode of the meraglim tells this story of the suspension of Divine assistance. The meraglim were exemplary figures. (Ramban[6] opines that they are mentioned in descending order of greatness. That means that four of them were greater than Yehoshua!) Their greatness did not help them prevail over the challenge, once Hashem stopped His usual assistance. Left to their own devices – and greatness – ten failed miserably. Yehoshua succeeded because of Moshe’s brachah; Calev sought special assistance at the grave of the avos. The Torah dramatically shows what happens when Hashem stops actively protecting a person from a yetzer hora that is stronger than him.

All the devices Hashem employs to thwart us from doing aveiros, however, are there only when we appreciate them. When people decide they wish to be fiercely independent and go at it alone, Hashem complies. Sadly, left to their own resources, people do not succeed in the constant battle with the yetzer hora.

What, then, were the Jews about to enter the Land to do? Ostensibly, they wanted something quite reasonable:

enough military intelligence about the Land to be able to wage a successful campaign of conquest. Aren't we told that we should never rely on miracles, but do reasonable hishtadlus?

Yes – but as we know, “reasonable hishtadlus” is madregah-dependent. And the expectations for a tzibbur are different from those of an individual. For the Bnei Yisrael at that moment, hishtadlus was permitted, but not required. For over a year, they had survived entirely through the miraculous. Hashem was unambiguous about His plan to take them into the Land, and have them inherit it. For them, relying on a miracle was a real option – one they chose not to accept.

Had sending spies been an actual aveirah, Hashem would not have told Moshe that He would countenance it. It wasn't a full aveirah. Rather, it showed a leaning, a predilection of the people for the improper. To that, Hashem responded with “creating an opening” to sin. He did so by removing the assistance that He ordinarily offers good people to prevail over their yetzer hora. Without that assistance, chet was sure to follow.

That is the lesson of the meraglim in a nutshell.

1. Based on Daas Torah by Rav Yeruchem Levovitz zt”l, Bamidbar, pgs. 114-117. 2. Bamidbar 13:2 3. Kiddushin 30b 4. Shabbos 104a 5. Bamidbar 22:22 6 Bamidbar 13:4

It's an old anecdote. Years ago, the Israeli parliament, or Knesset, convened an emergency session to figure out a solution for the Israeli economy.

One brilliant minister said, "Let's declare war on the U.S., and then, in the wake of the utter destruction America will bring upon us, we will receive billions of dollars for reconstruction, like Germany and Japan."

"Sounds great," responded another member of the Knesset. "One problem: What will we do if we win the war?"

Twelve Jews on a Mission

This week's portion, Shlach, tells the story of 12 men who were dispatched by Moses from the desert to go and survey the Land of Canaan and its inhabitants. The purpose of their journey was to prepare the Jewish people for the subsequent conquest and settlement of the Land.[1]

Upon discharging the spies on their mission, Moses presented them with a list of questions they needed to answer. "See the Land," Moses said to them. "How is it? And the nations that dwell in it—are they strong or weak? Are they few or numerous? And how is the land in which they dwell—is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they dwell—are they open or are they fortified?" When the twelve spies returned from their 40-day tour of Israel they presented to the people a report of their findings.

"We arrived at the Land to which you sent us," the spies said, "and indeed it flows with milk and honey and this is its fruit. But the people that dwell in the land are powerful, the cities are greatly fortified and we also saw the offspring of the giants. We cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us," they proclaimed.

The report demoralized the Jewish nation and drained it of the motivation to enter the Land. As a result, the spies died, and much of the generation died in the desert, never making it into the Promised Land. Only 39 years later, in the year 1276 B.C.E., did the children and grandchildren of this generation cross the borders and settle in the Promised Land.

Kill the Messenger?

One of the many questions raised by biblical commentators [2] concerns the reason for the spies being condemned and receiving punishment. Moses gave them a detailed list of questions about the Land; he instructed

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Subject: The Only Legitimate Question In Life - Essay by Rabbi YY

The Only Legitimate Question In Life

Why Were the Spies Condemned for Reporting the Facts?

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson

The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer. -- General Montgomery

The Hole in the Roof

A rabbi stands before his congregation and reports to them that a massive hole has been found in the roof of the synagogue.

"Now I have good news and bad news for you," the Rabbi continues. "The good news is that we have the money to repair it; the bad news is that the money is in your pockets."

If We Win?

them to make their own observations as to what will await the people upon their arrival.

This is exactly what the spies did. They came back with an answer to all of Moses' questions and reported what they perceived to be the reality. If Moses expected them to cover up their observations -- that the Land was inhabited by mighty men and its cities were greatly fortified -- he should have never sent them in the first place!

Why were the men faulted for relating what they had seen?

Introducing Paralysis

The answer is that if the spies had merely related to the people the reality of the situation as they saw it, everything would have been fine. But they did more than that. They used the difficulties they observed as an excuse to capitulate in the face of fear.

Had the spies returned and said, "Hey guys, we have seen a mighty people and well-protected cities in the Land, so now we need to devise an effective strategy of how to go about our challenging mission," they would have fulfilled their task flawlessly. The moment they responded to the obstacles by saying "We cannot do it anymore," they swayed an entire people to abandon their G-d-given destiny.

The spies are condemned for substituting the legitimate and important question "how will we do it" with the despairing and helpless conclusion, "we can never do it!"

Conquering Your Darkness

Each of us has a domain in our life that needs to be conquered, a terrain that needs to be transformed into a "holy land." Some of us need to battle trauma, fear, insecurity, temptation, addiction, or shame. We must confront challenges within our psyches, our marriages, and our families. Since the challenges that lay in recovery's path are at times frightening, we are naturally tempted to believe that we are incapable of overcoming our darkness and we surrender to the obstacles.

The feeling is understandable, but if you surrender to it, it will rob you of the opportunity to liberate your life and arrive at your personal "Promised Land." The option of resignation compels you to remain stuck in a barren desert made up of the stuff of shame and despair.

The question ought never to be, "can I do it?" That is never the question. G-d conceived you in love, and the day you were born is the day He declared that the world is

incomplete without you. As the saying goes, sometimes when you find yourself in a dark place you think you've been buried, but you've actually been planted. The resources to repair the "hole in our personal roof" are present. Every problem can be dealt with. G-d has sent you into each of your life's journeys with the power to bring light into your darkness, and discover your own inner infinity, as an ambassador of love, light, and hope. The only legitimate question is, "how do I do it?"^[3] [1]Numbers chapters 13-14. [2] Nachmanides in his commentary on the opening verses of the portion. [3] This essay is based on an address I heard from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbos Parshas Shlach, 21 Sivan, 5749 (June 24, 1989), published in Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2. Cf. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 pp. 39-41. For other answers to the above question see Likkutei Sichos vol. 18 Shlach 1, and many references noted there.

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subject: Rav Frand - Sipur and Dibur in Saying Lashon HaRah

Sipur and Dibur in Saying Lashon HaRah

Rashi quotes a Gemara (Sotah 35a) that the Spies—as punishment for their negative report about Eretz Yisrael—died in a plague: Rav Shimon ben Lakish states they died an unusual death (misah m'shuneh). Rav Chanina bar Papa elaborated, based on an exposition by Rav Sheila, that when they died their tongues became elongated and stretched to their navels, and worms started crawling back and forth between their tongues and their navels.

Rashi says they suffered a “midah k’neged midah” (“measure for measure”) punishment. The simple reading of Rashi is that they sinned with their tongues (through speech), and therefore their punishment involved this grotesque distortion of their tongues. We might wonder, however, why would it not have been sufficient to punish them midah k’neged midah by having their tongues fall out or somehow become paralyzed so that they could not speak anymore? What is this business of having their tongues become elongated and stretched all the way down to their belly buttons? Why is that too part of the midah k’neged midah?

This is a question asked by the Tolner Rebbe, who provides a lengthy and beautiful exposition to answer this question. I will only be sharing brief parts of his much longer Dvar Torah. In order to answer this question, he calls to our attention—as is his holy style—three very interesting stylistic inferences (diyukim) that appear in the pesukim of our parsha.

Diyuk #1: Upon return of the Spies from their mission, the pasuk says, “They went and came to Moshe and to Aharon and to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel, to the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh, and brought back the report to them (va’yasheevu osam davar – literally ‘they returned their answer’) ...” (Bamidbar 13:26). However, the next pasuk says: “They reported to him and they said (va’yesapru lo va’yomru lo), ‘We arrived at the Land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.’” (Bamidbar 13:27). The Tolner Rebbe asks—and this is really the question of the Ohr HaChaim haKadosh—why the change in expression from va’yasheevu osam davar to va’yesapru lo va’yomru?

Diyuk #2: When pasuk 26 originally says they came back with their report, it says they reported to “them”. Who is “them”? Moshe, Aharon, and Klal Yisrael. But in pasuk 27, it suddenly says they told “him”. Who is “him”? Moshe Rabbeinu. Why did they switch? What are they telling Moshe Rabbeinu that they are not sharing with Aharon and the rest of Klal Yisrael?

Diyuk #3: Sefer Devorim is known as Mishna Torah. The first several parshiyos of Sefer Devorim are really just a synopsis of what happened to Klal Yisrael in the Midbar. Listen to how the pesukim there describe the incident of the Spies (Devorim 1:22 – 25): “All of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead of us, and let them spy out the Land for us and bring word back to us—the road on which we should ascend and the cities to which we should come.’”; “They took in their hands from the fruit of the Land and brought it down to us; they brought back word to us and said, ‘Good is the Land that Hashem, our G-d gives us!’” Up until that point, Moshe Rabbeinu does not say anything bad about them! That is not the story of the Meraglim! Eventually, Moshe tells the rest of the story, that the people were too frightened to go into the Land. But that is not the real story. The real story was that the Spies themselves had scared the people with their slanderous report of Eretz Yisrael.

In order to answer the three questions raised by these “diyukim,” the Tolner Rebbe explains that the answer lies in the first diyuk – the connotation of the difference between “va’yasheevu osam davar” and the word “va’yesapru“.

“Va’yasheevu osam davar” means I send you on a mission, I ask you to get the facts, you ascertain the facts, and you report the facts as they are—with editorial comment—just the cold hard facts; no assessment, no elaboration, just the things as they are.

Va’yesaper implies Sipur—the telling of a whole elaborate story. We are familiar with the mitzvah of Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim. The mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus is not to sit down at the Seder and say to your children: “We were slaves, the Ribono shel Olam took us out of Egypt, let’s eat.” Sipur implies questions and answers, beginning with “Gnus” and ending with “Shvach”—telling over the whole story. There is a difference between a report which is just the facts and a story which embellishes the dry facts.

The Ramban writes that the aveyra of the Meraglim was precisely the fact that they went beyond merely reporting facts. They did not stop at the “Va’yasheevu osam davar” but rather they went into their own editorial comment called “Va’Yesapru lo“. The Ramban gives an example: Moshe Rabbeinu asked them to report back about the land—whether it was fertile (shmeinah) or infertile (razah), whether it had trees or not. They answered affirmatively to each of those questions. The land was fertile, it had trees, and they brought back fruit to demonstrate this. There was nothing wrong, likewise, in reporting that the inhabitants lived in fortified cities. All this was true and is accurately described in Sefer Devorim, as explained in diyuk #3. However, their aveyra was in the word “Efes...” (But all that is worthless) “...for the nation there is strong.” That is editorial comment. It is Sipur. Nobody asked them for that. That was not their mission.

Now, says the Tolner Rebbe, we understand the change in language. First the Torah says that they gave their report – va’yasheevu osam davar. Perfect. No aveyra there. They gave this report to everyone. But then... va’yesapru lo. The Tolner Rebbe quotes the sefer Arvei Nachal, who ties in the second diyuk. He says that they went over to “him”—specifically to Moshe—and whispered something into his ears. When the nation sees the Spies whispering

something into Moshe's ears, what does that encourage? "What's the rest of the story?"

The Arvei Nachal says that this was part of the plot. The Spies told Moshe alone, in order to pique the curiosity of the rest of the people: "Hey, what are they whispering to him? Is there something that he knows that we don't know?" The people then pressed the Spies for this "privileged information" and they let word of their editorial comments get out among the people.

Now we understand, says the Tolner Rebbe, the midah k'neged midah of the punishment mentioned in the Gemara in Sotah. Their tongues became elongated—indicating their sin was that they spoke too much! They spoke too much, so they wound up with too much tongue! The Gemara in Eruchin 15b contains a lengthy passage detailing the evils of Lashon HaRah. The verb used in describing someone who speaks Lashon HaRah is invariably not haMedaber Lashon HaRah, as we might expect, but rather haMesaper Lashon HaRah. Engaging in slander always involves 'story telling'. When someone tells the 'cold facts' (e.g., this fellow went bankrupt), he is engaging in dibur (speech). But when he starts elaborating and building it up into story content (e.g., you will never guess what I know about this fellow..., do you want the scoop why he went bankrupt?), that is being MeSaper Lashon HaRah. It is the process of adding the salt and pepper to the dry facts, revealing the "secret" behind the facts. That is the real aveyra of Lashon HaRah. We are not saying that someone who is Medaber Lashon HaRah (sticking to the basic uncomplimentary facts) is a Tzadik. But someone who elaborates and makes it into a juicy story, he is the real MeSaper Lashon HaRah that the Talmud is discussing.

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Rav Kook Torah

Korach: Who Needs the Priesthood?

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

"You have taken too much upon yourselves! All the people in the community are holy, and God is with them. Why are you setting yourselves above God's congregation?" (Num. 16:3)

Korach's call for religious equality resonates well with modern, egalitarian sensibilities. Why indeed do the Jewish people need a special caste of priests? Why cannot each member of the nation participate in the holy service, personally offering up his own gifts to God? Why do we need kohanim to serve as intermediaries?

Specialized Sectors

To answer this question, Rav Kook employed the paradigm of the human body. Each organ performs a unique function, providing for the health and general welfare of the body. Despite their different qualities and tasks, the organs work together, functioning harmoniously as a unified organism.

Human society is also a living organic body, composed of various sectors and groups. Each sector — farmers, scientists, doctors, and so on — provides a specific service for the collective whole. These communal 'organs' meet society's various needs according to their particular talents and training. As they work together and acknowledge the contribution of other sectors, they ensure the harmonious functioning and flourishing of the community as a whole.

The analogy may be extended further. Just as each individual is blessed with certain strengths and ambitions, so too each nation has specific talents and ideals. These national aspirations may be expressed in the sciences, art, philosophy, economic strength, etc.

Not every limb of a gifted individual is directly involved in his chosen profession. The artist utilizes the hand and eyes, the singer uses the voice, the philosopher uses the

mind, and the Olympic runner uses the legs. It is similarly impossible for the entire nation to be directly involved in advancing the nation's ideals. Each nation needs a cadre of spiritual leaders who cultivate the soul of the nation. This spiritual elite allows the other sectors to attend to society's material needs, confident that the unique content that gives the nation its distinctive nature will not be forsaken.

Guarding Israel's Spiritual State

The need for a spiritual leadership is even more pronounced when it comes to the Jewish people, whose national ideology transcends the physical world in which we live. All efforts made to advance the nation's material welfare run the risk of diverting energy from the nation's spiritual aspirations. As a mediaeval Jewish moralist commented, "Whatever builds up the physical detracts from the spiritual."

Due to this concern, practical affairs are attended to in desultory fashion. In the end, both aspects are harmed. The nation's spiritual efforts become disoriented due to its confused material state; and its physical state is weakened due to the coerced admixture of concern for spiritual matters.

Therefore, we need a cadre of lofty tzaddikim, blessed with breadth of knowledge, charged with securing the spiritual state of the nation. This elite is not perturbed if the rest of society cannot fully share in the richness of their spiritual life due to preoccupation with material matters. They know that spirituality will automatically permeate the nation due to the people's natural inclination to holiness. These public servants represent the entire community, and they safeguard its spiritual treasure. The nation in return regards them as its most important assets, and honors them accordingly.

Radical Agents of Godliness

The Kohanim are mistakenly thought of as intermediaries between man and God. In fact, they are not meant to be intermediaries to God, but to enable immediacy to God. When we approach God, we do not approach Him with our basest drives and inclinations, but with our holiest aspirations and desires. It is our elevated qualities which draw our entire being toward a Godly, enlightened life. The same is true for the national organism. It is not right or even possible to approach God using society's weakest elements. The nation cannot draw near to God with those who are preoccupied by lives confused by physical

sensations and upheavals. This would lead to a feeble level of enlightenment, spiritually impoverishing the nation and the world at large.

Society therefore designated a special sector to enable the entire people to approach God. The lofty, righteous kohanim, steeped in kindness and elevated wisdom, truly know God. The rest of the nation relies on the holiness of their knowledge and emotions. The nation takes pride in the spiritual greatness of the kohanim; it is blessed through their blessing and sanctified through their sanctity. The people are bolstered with strength and inspiration as they work toward their material, social, and political objectives.

The need to appoint a select cadre of spiritual leaders reflects an innate aspect of human nature. Only after a long progression will this institution be truly revealed in all of its nobility — but we are not deterred by lengthy processes. We continue along the path we started so long ago, and we look forward to its completion and perfection.

To designate the entire people as priests, without distinctions, all equally wise and spiritually enlightened — this is not feasible in the world's present state. Currently we need to aspire to a national spirit of holiness, by virtue of the nation's noblest parts. The kohanim will serve as radical agents for sanctity and spirituality, enabling the entire nation to flourish in all endeavors, in its renascence of life in the Land of Israel. (Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Orot, pp. 53-55)

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subject: Assembling Reminders (Shelach Lecha)

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

Assembling Reminders

SHELACH LECHA • 5775, 5782

Imagine the following: You are driving ever so slightly above the speed limit. You see a police car in your rear-view mirror. You slow down. You know perfectly well that it is wrong to exceed the speed limit whether anyone is watching or not but, being human, the likelihood of being found out and penalised makes a difference.

Recently a series of experiments has been conducted by psychologists to test the impact of the sense of being observed on pro-social behaviour. Chenbo Zhong, Vanessa Bohns and Francesca Gino constructed a test to see whether a feeling of anonymity made a difference. They randomly assigned to a group of students either sunglasses or clear glasses, telling them that they were testing reactions to a new product line. They were also, in an apparently unrelated task, given six dollars and chance of sharing any of it with a stranger. Those wearing clear glasses gave on average \$2.71, while those wearing sunglasses gave an average of \$1.81. The mere fact of wearing dark glasses, and thus feeling unrecognised and unrecognisable, reduced generosity. In another experiment, they found that students given the opportunity to cheat in a test were more likely to do so in a dimly lit room than in a brightly lit one.^[1] The more we think we may be observed, the more moral and generous we become.

Kevin Haley and Dan Fessler tested students on the so-called Dictator Game, in which you are given, say, ten dollars, together with the opportunity of sharing any or none of it with an anonymous stranger. Beforehand, and without realising it was part of the experiment, some of the students were briefly shown a pair of eyes as a computer screen saver, while others saw a different image. Those exposed to the eyes gave 55 per cent more to the stranger than the others. In another study researchers placed a coffee maker in a university hallway. Passers-by could take coffee and leave money in the box. On some weeks a poster with watchful eyes was hanging on the wall nearby, on others a picture of flowers. On the weeks where the eyes were displayed, people left on average 2.76 times as much money as at other times.^[2] Ara Norenzayan, author of the book Big Gods, from which these studies are taken, concludes that “watched people are nice people.”^[3] That is part of what makes religion a force for honest and altruistic behaviour: the belief that God sees what we do. It is no coincidence that, as belief in a personal God has waned in the West, surveillance by CCTV and other means has had to be increased. Voltaire once said that, whatever his personal views on the matter, he wanted his butler and other servants to believe in God because then he would be cheated less.^[4]

Less obvious is the experimental finding that what makes the difference to the way we behave is not simply what we believe, but rather the fact of being reminded of it. In one test, conducted by Brandon Randolph-Seng and Michael Nielsen, participants were exposed to words flashed for less than 100 milliseconds, that is, long enough to be detected by the brain but not long enough for conscious awareness. They were then given a test in which they had the opportunity to cheat. Those who had been shown words relating to God were significantly less likely to do so than people who had been shown neutral words. The same result was yielded by another test in which, beforehand, some of the participants were asked to recall the Ten Commandments while others were asked to remember the last ten books they had read. Merely being reminded of the Ten Commandments reduced the tendency to cheat.

Another researcher, Deepak Malhotra, surveyed the willingness of Christians to give to online charitable appeals. The response was 300 per cent greater if the appeal was made on a Sunday than on any other day of the week. Clearly the participants did not change their minds about religious belief or the importance of charitable giving between weekdays and Sundays. It was simply that on Sundays they were more likely to have thought about God. A similar test was carried out among Muslims in Morocco, where it was found that people were more likely to give generously to charity if they lived in a place where they could hear the call to prayer from a local minaret.

Nazorayan’s conclusion is that ‘religion is more in the situation than in the person,’^[5] or to put it another way, what makes the difference to our behaviour is less what we believe than the phenomenon of being reminded, even subconsciously, of what we believe.

That is precisely the psychology behind the mitzvah of tzitzit in this week’s parsha of Shelach Lecha: This shall be your tzitzit and you shall see it and remember all the Lord’s commandments and keep them, not straying after your heart and after your eyes, following your own sinful desires. Thus you will be reminded to keep all My commandments, and be holy to your God. Num. 15:39

The Talmud (Menachot 44a) tells the story of a man who, in a moment of moral weakness, decided to pay a visit to a certain courtesan. He was in the course of removing his

clothes when he saw his tzitzit and immediately froze. The courtesan asked him what the matter was, and he told her about the tzitzit, saying that the four fringes had become accusing witnesses against him for the sin he was about to commit. The woman was so impressed by the power of this simple command that she converted to Judaism.

We sometimes fail to understand the connection between religion and morality. Dostoevsky is reputed to have said to have said that if God did not exist, all would be permitted.^[6] This is not the mainstream Jewish view. According to Rabbi Nissim Gaon, the moral imperatives accessible to reason have been binding since the dawn of humanity.^[7] We have a moral sense. We know that certain things are wrong. But we also have conflicting desires. We are drawn to do what we know we should not do, and often we yield to temptation. Anyone who has ever tried to lose weight knows exactly what that means. In the moral domain, it is what the Torah means when it speaks of "straying after your heart and after your eyes, following your own sinful desires." (Numbers 15:39) The moral sense, wrote James Q. Wilson, "is not a strong beacon light radiating outward to illuminate in sharp outline all that it touches." It is, rather, "a small candle flame, casting vague and multiple shadows, flickering and sputtering in the strong winds of power and passion, greed and ideology." He added: "But brought close to the heart" it "dispels the darkness and warms the soul."^[8] Wittgenstein once said that "the work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders."^[9] In the case of Judaism the purpose of the outward signs – tzitzit, mezuzah and tefillin – is precisely that: to assemble reminders, on our clothes, our homes, our arms and head, that certain things are wrong, and that even if no other human being sees us, God sees us and will call us to account. As a result of recent research, now have the empirical evidence that reminders make a significant difference to the way we act.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who shall know it?" said Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 17:9

One of the blessings and curses of human nature is that we use our power of reason not always and only to act rationally, but also to rationalise and make excuses for the things we do, even when we know we should not have done them. That, perhaps is one of the lessons the Torah

wishes us to draw from the story of the spies. Had they recalled what God had done to Egypt, the mightiest empire of the ancient world, they would not have said: "We cannot attack those people; they are stronger than we are." (Num. 13:31) But they were gripped by fear. Strong emotion – fear especially – distorts our perception. It activates the amygdala, the source of our most primal reactions, causing it to override the prefrontal cortex that allows us to think rationally about the consequences of our decisions.

Tzitzit, with their thread of blue, remind us of heaven, and that is what we most need if we are consistently to act in accordance with the better angels of our nature.

[1] Chen-Bo Zhong, Vanessa K. Bohns, and Francesca Gino, Good Lamps Are the Best Police: Darkness Increases Dishonesty and Self-Interested Behavior, Psychological Science 21 (2009), pp. 311–314. [2] This and the following paragraphs are based on Ara Norenzayan, Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict, Princeton University Press, 2013, pp. 13-54. [3] Ibid., p. 19. [4] Voltaire, Political Writings, ed. David Williams (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 190. [5] Norenzayan, Big Gods, p. 39. [6] He did not say these precise words, but said something similar in The Brothers Karamazov (1880). [7] Commentary to Brachot, introduction. [8] James Q. Wilson, The Moral Sense, Free Press, 1993, p. 251. [9] Philosophical Investigations, §127.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

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subject: Torah Weekly

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parsha Insights
For the week ending 18 June 2022 / 19 Sivan 5782

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair -

www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Parshat Shlach Lecha

Impossible Objects

"See the Land. How is it?" (13:18)

In the twentieth century, artists began to play with perspective by drawing "impossible objects." These objects included stairs that always ascend or cubes where the back meets the front. Such works were popularized by the artist M. C. Escher and the mathematician Roger

Penrose. Although referred to as "impossible objects," such objects as the Necker Cube and the Penrose triangle can be sculpted in 3D by using anamorphic illusion. When viewed at a certain angle, such sculptures appear as the so-called impossible objects.

In 1946, American scientist Adelbert Ames Jr. invented the "Ames room." When viewed through a peephole, the room appears to have normal perspective. However, all other viewpoints reveal that the room is constructed of irregular trapezoids. One of the most interesting effects of an Ames room is that the distorted perspective can make people and objects look much bigger or smaller than they really are. For this reason, Ames rooms are widely used in movies for practical special effects. A well-known example is the homes in the Shire from the Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films. Using this forced perspective, the character of Gandalf appears much larger than the characters of Frodo and Bilbo, without the use of digital effects.

"I spy with my little eye..." is a guessing game where one player (the spy) chooses an object within sight and announces to the other players that "I spy with my little eye something beginning with...", and names the first letter of the object. Other players attempt to guess this object.

In truth, we all have 'little eyes.' Eyes that want to see — what they want to see. This world can be a world of anamorphic illusion. If we choose to rely on our own vision, we will blame the Creator for creating a world that makes no sense to us, a world of illusion. Hashem gives us 20/20 vision. But to see things as they really are, we must see beyond our little eyes and use the eyes of faith.

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from: **Bais HaVaad Halacha Center**

<info@baishavaad.com>

date: Jun 23, 2022, 9:00 PM

subject: Business Halacha Daily

Can I Oppose my Neighbor's Plan to Extend His House Before a Local Zoning Board?

Question: My neighbor wants to build an extension onto his house that I feel will negatively affect me. He needs a variance from the local Zoning Board in order to do so. Am I permitted to object before the board?

<https://baishavaad.org/can-i-oppose-my-neighbors-plan-to-extend-his-house-before-a-local-zoning-board/> to view

Rav Shmuel Honigwachs

Answer: In olden times, Jews were confined to ghettos, where there was a very limited amount of living space. The Maharik discusses a case where a newcomer wants to take up residence in the ghetto but the old residents oppose his presence because he will occupy space that they cannot afford to give away. He says that the residents would be permitted to petition the local squire in order to prevent this Jew from moving in and this would not be forbidden under the category of going to a secular court. He compares this to a case brought in the Mishnah of a man who spots a lost object and falls on it. The Gemara explains that since the man did not make a valid kinyan on the object, others may grab it away from him. Presumably, the original man who fell on it can also do whatever he can to keep them away and retain it for himself.

The Maharik says that the space in the ghetto can be compared to the lost object in the Mishnah. Since the land the man wants to occupy is currently ownerless, he has a right to try to grab it for himself. However, the current residents, who have already "fallen" on the spot, also can do whatever it takes to prevent him from acquiring it, including petitioning the local authorities to keep him away.

Note, however, that the Bais Yosef disagrees with this comparison and does not permit petitioning the authorities in this manner.

There is an additional question about whether one is ever permitted to oppose the construction of a shul. The Pischei Teshuva says that even according to the Maharik, one would only be able to use the authorities to prevent the building of a private home but not to prevent the building of a shul. However, the Divrei Chaim clearly argues and says that the Maharik's reasoning can be used even to prevent a shul from being built.

To view past shiurim, please visit baishavaad.org/daily.
Bais HaVaad Halach Center, Rabbi Yehoshua Wolfe - Menahel, Rabbi Yehoshua Greenspan Safra D'Dayna, 105 River Ave., Lakewood, NJ 08701

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis chiefrabbi.org

Dvar Torah Shelach: The Torah's antidote to an inferiority complex

22 June 2022

What is the Torah's antidote to an inferiority complex? In Parshat Shelach Lecha, we are told how the meraglim, the spies, returned from the Promised Land. Ten out of twelve of them delivered an evil report; they said (Bamidbar 13:33),

"Vanehi be'eyneynu kechagagim vechain hayinu b'eyneyhem." When we saw the tall people living in Chevron, we appeared to ourselves as if we were grasshoppers and that's also what they thought of us." Now it's one thing for them to describe how they were feeling but to presume that the inhabitants of Chevron viewed them as being like grasshoppers – how were they to know that? It's obviously because they felt totally inadequate and inferior at that time.

On this passage the Kotzker Rebbe remarks that they shouldn't have bothered about what the Canaanites were thinking of them. They should have concentrated on their own values and strengths. Let us actually look at the text: let's see what Yehoshua and Calev, the two righteous meraglim (spies) said. First of all they said to the nation, "Tovah haaretz meod meod!" – "This land is very, very good!"

They didn't just say 'tovah' – good, or 'tovah meod' – very good, but 'tovah tovah meod' – very, very good! Their attitude was to look on the bright side, to be positive, to look at the blessings that Hashem had given them. In addition they said to the people,

"Im chafeitz banu Hashem heivi otanu," – "It's Hashem Who wants to bring us into the land."

Their implication was: let's trust in Him. They continued, "ki lachmeinu hem," – "they are our bread."

Today we might say, 'they're toast!' meaning: we can devour them. We are strong. We have power.

So therefore here we have the Torah's four key points as it offers an antidote to an inferiority complex.

1. First of all, don't be bothered by what you think others are thinking about you.
2. Secondly, be positively minded.
3. Thirdly, recognise your own strengths and abilities.
4. Finally, always trust in Hashem.

Shabbat shalom.

Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

from: **Alan Fisher** <afisherads@yahoo.com>
to: Saadia Greenberg <sgreenberg11@gmail.com>,
date: Jun 23, 2022, 11:22 PM
subject: Devrei Torah for Shabbat Shelach Lecha 5782
BS”D June 24, 2022
Potomac Torah Study Center

Vol. 9 #39, June 24, 2022; 25 Sivan 5782; Shelach 5782

NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z”l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Mazel-Tov to Rabbanit Dasi Fruchter and Daniel Krupka on their wedding this coming week. Mazel-Tov also to the proud parents, Rena & Chaim Fruchter and Elisa Kahn & Anatol Krupka; siblings, and entire family. Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

How many opinions on a given subject would two Jews (or two Israelis) have? Look to the number of political parties in Israel to realize that the answer could be several. Is the national pastime in Israel having political elections? Regardless, this small country, surrounded by enemy nations everywhere on the globe, faces the prospect of yet another election, yet again without achieving a majority able to rule easily for the next few (or many) years.

In Shelach Lecha, Moshe sends a group of a dozen leaders from twelve tribes on a fact finding forty day tour of the land that Hashem had promised to our ancestors. Moshe asks the leaders to report back on the land – is it good, productive, and everything that God had promised? The tourists do not report back to Moshe as he probably had expected. Instead, they call a meeting of all the people (approximately two million of them) and give both a report and their opinions on options for the future. Naturally twelve Jews could not agree. While all the tourists report that the land is beautiful, productive, and rich, not all agree that the people should go in and capture it. Ten leaders add to their report by stating that the people are strong and giants, that the land eats up the people, and that B’Nai Yisrael would not be able to capture it. The minority report is that yes there are

challenges, but with the help of Hashem, we can and will drive out the people and take over the land that God had promised to our nation.

In the short time since God sent plagues to destroy Egypt, the strongest nation in the world, brought two million of our people through the desert, presented the mitzvot with great drama (Revelation at Har Sinai), provided the people with water from rocks and food from the sky six days a week, did two million Jews not learn anything about Hashem's power? Did they not learn that God sends plagues to our enemies and sends the same symbols to help us out of love? (For example, Hashem turns Egypt's water to blood and drowns the people while turning rocks and sand to refreshing water for B'Nai Yisrael.) Caleb and Yehoshua understand God's message and know that with Him on our side, no other nation can defeat B'Nai Yisrael. The ten other leaders, who should know better, completely misinterpret facts and deny both God's love for Israel and God's power to defeat our enemies, even when operating entirely behind the scenes. The story of the Meraglim has parallels back to previous Jewish history, as Beth Lesch (one of Rabbi David Fohrman's colleagues) relates convincingly. For example, the Meraglim story shares key words and situations with the story of the brothers' treatment of Yosef when he ends up being sold and exported as a slave in Egypt. (The evidence is available in podcasts at alephbeta.org.) Yehuda, a son of Leah, and Yosef, first born son of Rachel, were the key opponents in the sale of Yosef. In the story of the Meraglim, Caleb, from the tribe of Yehuda, and Yehoshua, from the tribe of Ephraim (grandson of Rachel), work together to try to convince the people that God loves us and wants B'Nai Yisrael to enter the land – with God's full support ensuring victory. Sefer Bereishis presents generation after generation of sibling rivalry – from Kayin murdering his brother Hevel, to threats and fights between Yitzhak and Yishmael, Yaakov and Esav, and among Yaakov's brothers. Finally Menashe and Ephraim live together in peace; Aharon and Moshe live and work together as a team – progress, but not yet a tikkun for the troubles between the sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel. When Caleb (Yehuda) and Yehoshua (Ephraim) work together to try to save the generation of the Exodus, finally we see a tikkun for the problems between the Leah and Rachel sides of the Jewish family. Unfortunately, their efforts are

insufficient to persuade the majority, win a working majority, and create an enduring political leadership for that generation.

Sefer Bemidbar, which started with such promise, falls apart very quickly. Indeed, Miriam's tzaraat (apparently an issue between her and her brother Moshe), the sin of the Meraglim, and Korach's rebellion all take place the same week. (See the Torah Anthology, vol. 13, pp. 333-334, for the evidence.) Might B'Nai Yisrael have entered and captured Israel many years earlier if Yosef had not been sold into slavery in Egypt? Certainly the nation could have entered the land 38 years earlier if not for the sin of the Meraglim. How often do we prove to be our own worst enemies?

The discussions of the Meraglim from by beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, from more than a quarter century ago remain vivid in my mind. Rabbi Cahan brought out several of these points in his discussions over the years. Connections across time in the Torah continue to fascinate me after many years of study. Hopefully we Jews can learn some of these lessons and bypass some of the adverse consequences of dispute in the future.

Shabbat Shalom.

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlema for Yehoshua Mayer HaLevi ben Nechama Zelda, Yonatan Ophir ben Ilana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com
from: Rabbi Yirmiyahu Kaganoff
<ymkaganoff@gmail.com>
to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com
Grand Opening!

By Rabbi Yirmiyahu Kaganoff

Question #1: Aramaic or Arabic? Why is Kaddish in Aramaic? Isn't it prohibited to pray in Aramaic and Arabic?

Question #2: Doing it right - In which arm does a lefty hold the sefer Torah?

Question #3: Caught in the act - Do I join everyone in reciting Berich She'mei when I am in the middle of pesukei dezimra?

Background

The structure of most of our prayers, including the Shemoneh Esrei and the berachos we recite surrounding the Shema, was created by the Anshei Keneses Hagedolah, 120 great leaders of the Jewish people who lived during the beginning of the second Beis Hamikdash. Many of these leaders had been exiled to Babylonia before the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash. This venerable group included such great leaders as Ezra, Mordechai, Nechemiah, Daniel, Chanaya, Mishael, Azaryah, Zerubavel, Shimon Hatzadik (of the famous story with Alexander the Great), Chagai, Zechariah and Malachi (the last three prophets of the Jewish people). The Anshei Keneses Hagedolah authored and edited the last volumes of Tanach and organized it into its final form (Baba Basra 14b-15a).

Perhaps one way to recognize how great the leaders of this generation were is by realizing that Mordechai, whom we all know was a great gadol, was not the greatest of his generation. All agree that this distinction belongs to Ezra.

Chazal tell us that Ezra was so great that he should have returned to Eretz Yisrael accompanied by the same types of miracles that occurred when Yehoshua led the Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael. Then, the Bnei Yisrael experienced many overt miracles including what happened when the Jordan River was crossed, when Yericho was conquered, and when the Canaanite kings were eliminated (Berachos 4a). Unfortunately, the Jewish people in the days of Ezra were not on a high enough level to warrant such miracles, but the statement of Chazal provides an appreciation for the greatness of their leaders.

Ezra, fully aware of the problems that Kelal Yisrael faced in so many major areas -- from intermarriage (see Ezra, Chapter 9), to Shabbos observance (see Nechemiah, Chapter 13), to knowledge of the laws germane to the

Beis Hamikdash (see Chaggai, Chapter 2; Pesachim 17a) -- instituted many takanos to assist the rebirth of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael in his time (Bava Kama 82a). Among the many improvements he made was adding to the takanah made by Moshe Rabbeinu to read the Torah three times every week. After Ezra's additions to this takanah, three people are called up every time the Torah is read, and it is read also at Mincha on Shabbos. Thus, in his day, the practice of reading the Torah already resembled the way we fulfill this mitzvah.

Berich She'mei

In the article I sent last week, I discussed some of the halachos and customs that we observe when we remove the sefer Torah from the aron hakodesh. We discussed the beautiful Aramaic prayer that begins with the words Berich She'mei. This prayer, whose source is in the Zohar (Parshas Vayakheil #206a#225), was written by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the author of the Zohar, the tanna quoted all over the Mishnah and Gemara simply as Rabbi Shimon, whose burial place on Har Meiron is the focus of much celebration, poetry, and three-year olds' haircuts on Lag Be'Omer.

Bowing during Berich She'mei

In many communities, the custom is to bow before the sefer Torah when reciting the words *desagidna kamei*, "When I bow before Him," during Berich She'mei. The authorities dispute whether this custom is proper. The Riaz, a rishon, is among those who contend that one should not bow other than to Hashem, not even toward the aron hakodesh or a sefer Torah (quoted by Shiltei Hagiborim, Kiddushin 14b note #1 and by Keneses Hagedolah, Yoreh Deah 282). Rav Yisrael Binyamin, an esteemed 16th century posek, also questioned this practice, contending that it might be forbidden because of the prohibition of worshipping idols (see Shu't Ohalei Yaakov #57)!

The Kaf Hachayim concludes that we should not bow during Berich She'mei, since bowing when the sefer Torah is taken out is not mentioned in the Gemara, and the Gemara rules that we are to bow at specified points during the Shemonei Esrei – and not at any other time. This position is well-known as the opinion of the Vilna Gaon, who contended that we should not bow anywhere except when dictated by Chazal, not only during the Shemonei Esrei, but also during such prayers as Kaddish and Aleinu (Biur Hagra, Orach Chayim 56:10).

On the other hand, the Mahrikash, a highly respected 16th century posek, rules that it is correct to bow before the sefer Torah (Shu't Ohalei Yaakov #57), because otherwise we are stating something untruthful when we declare (while saying Berich She'mei) desagidna Kamei -- that we bow to Hashem but we do not. The Chida accepts this conclusion (Birkei Yosef, Orach Chayim 134:3), which is subsequently followed by Rav Ovadyah Yosef (Shu't Yabia Omer, Volume 5, Orach Chayim #8) who explains that bowing towards the sefer Torah is a sign of respect to Hashem, just as standing up for a sefer Torah is. This latter distinction is expressly opposed by the Riaz, who contends that it is required to stand up for a sefer Torah, but prohibited to bow to it.

A similar discussion is applicable regarding bowing when reciting Aleinu. Our custom is to bow when we say the words va'anachnu kor'im umishtachavim umodim, in which we say that we bow to Hashem. (Sefardim recite a shorter version here: va'anachnu mishtachavim.) Again, if we do not bow when we say these words, it appears as if we are being hypocritical and untruthful – we claim to be bowing, but we aren't!

Language

Much halachic literature is devoted to the fact that Berich She'mei is recited in Aramaic. In general, we discourage prayers in Aramaic, although there are major exceptions, such as Yekum Purkan, some selections in our selichos, and, of course, Kaddish. Some even question why we sing the beautiful Shabbos zemer, Kah ribbon alam, written in Aramaic by the great posek and mekubal, Rav Yisrael Najara, which includes prayers and requests (Shu't Har Tzvi, Orach Chayim #64). (By the way, there is no mention of Shabbos in Kah ribbon alam, and some Sefardim recite it as part of the daily davening, somewhat similar to the way we say Adon Olam or Yigdal.)

No Aramaic

The Gemara states that a person should not request from Hashem in the Aramaic language when he is praying by himself (Sotah 33a; Shabbos 12b). Many reasons are offered to explain this ruling (Elyah Rabbah 101:9); a more in-depth study of this topic will be postponed to a future date. For our purposes, I will share three approaches to the question, since there is an interesting halachic ramification that results.

A. Aramaic was viewed as a type of pidgin Hebrew, and therefore not acceptable for dignified procedures, such as

davening (Ma'adanei Hamelech). As some authorities note, Arabic is also considered a slang offshoot of Hebrew, and, therefore, it would be prohibited to daven in Arabic, in private (Elyah Rabbah 101:9).

B. In the days when Aramaic was the common spoken language, there was concern that if Jews prayed in Aramaic, they would forget whatever Hebrew they still maintained (Tamim Dei'im, quoted by Elyah Rabbah 101:9).

C. Hashem made certain that the angels do not understand Aramaic, so that they would not get jealous of some of the beautiful Aramaic prayers we recite (Tosafos, Berachos 3a s.v. Ve'onin; Be'er Sheva, Sotah 33a). According to the second and third reasons I cited, an individual could pray in Arabic, but not in Aramaic, whereas, according to the first reason, he should not pray in Arabic either.

We should also note that, since the prohibition against praying in Aramaic is only when praying privately, two of the three prayers we have mentioned, Kaddish and Berich She'mei, are not concerns, since they are recited only with a tzibur.

Reciting Berich She'mei during pesukei dezimra

What should someone do if he is in the middle of reciting pesukei dezimra when the sefer Torah is taken out? Should he recite the prayer of Berich She'mei, or does this constitute a prohibited interruption? Rav Shimon Greenvald, a greatly respected authority in pre-war Hungary, was asked this question, ruling that our davener should not interrupt pesukei dezimra to join the tzibur for Berich She'mei or any of the other prayers recited when the sefer Torah is taken out (Shu't Mahershag 1:52:2). However, if he has completed the brocha of Yishtabach and has not yet begun the brocha of Yotzeir Or, nor has he yet answered Borchu, he may recite Berich She'mei and the other prayers, together with the tzibur (Shu't Yabia Omer, Volume 5, Orach Chayim #8).

The reason for this ruling is that, although it is prohibited to interrupt between Yishtabach and Borchu, a very important matter may be performed at this time, and it is better to do it at this point in the davening than during the alternative options. For example, someone who did not have tzitzis or tefillin available before davening, or it was too early, then, for him to put them on, should put them on immediately after Yishtabach and, at that time, recite the appropriate berachos.

The basis for this is found in earlier authorities, who discuss whether mitzvah requirements or community needs are permitted to be discussed between Yishtabach and Borchu. The Tur (Orach Chayim 54) rules: “One may not interrupt between Yishtabach and Yotzeir, unless it is for community needs or (to solicit) for someone who needs to be supported from charity.” The Rema discusses this question at length (Darchei Moshe, Orach Chayim 54:1) and codifies the ruling of the Tur in his comments to Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 54:3), although he concludes that it is best to attempt to avoid any interruption at all. Thus, we see that, when there is a necessity to interrupt, it is better to do so between Yishtabach and Borchu than either earlier or later.

Berich She’mei and Rabbeinu Tam tefillin

Many men have the practice of removing their regular tefillin, which they refer to as Rashi tefillin, toward the end of davening and then putting on a different pair of tefillin, called Rabbeinu Tam tefillin. (A discussion of this topic will need to wait for a different time.) The question is what to do on Rosh Chodesh, since, according to some kabbalistic sources, tefillin should not be worn any time after Musaf, thus limiting strongly the opportune times for putting on Rabbeinu Tam tefillin. Some authorities permit putting on Rabbeinu Tam tefillin while reciting Berich She’mei (Yalkut Yosef 34:9), and wearing them through the reading of the Torah.

Being in the right

Returning to the laws of taking out the sefer Torah – the sefer Torah should be removed from the aron hakodesh using the right hand primarily and carry it by resting it against the right shoulder. This is because (1) the right hand and arm are used for most mitzvah actions. In addition, (2) various pesukim, such as, “His right hand embraces me” (Shir Hashirim 2:6) refer to our relationship with Hashem and the Torah in terms of the “right” hand.

Sefer Torah for southpaws

What should a left-handed person do? Should he pick up the sefer Torah primarily with his stronger hand and rest it against his stronger shoulder, or should he do both with his right hand and arm?

It should make a difference which of these two reasons is primary. If a right-handed person is to hold the Torah with his right hand because he uses it more to perform mitzvos, a left-handed person should take and hold the

sefer Torah with his left hand, which is the one he uses to perform mitzvos. On the other hand, if the right hand is preferred because pesukim place emphasis on the right, a lefty should use his right hand, as in the pesukim.

We find different approaches among the halachic authorities. The Pri Megadim (Eishel Avraham 134:5) is uncertain whether a left-handed person give the left hand preference when taking out the Torah, and seems more inclined that he should. On the other hand, the Sha’ar Efrayim concludes that a left-handed person may emphasize either hand as he takes the Torah out, but he should rest it in his right hand against his right shoulder, notwithstanding that this is his weaker hand and arm, unless he is afraid that he might drop it (Sha’ar 10:2). The Mishnah Berurah (282:1) rules that when a sefer Torah is handed from one left-handed person to another, they should both emphasize use of their right hands.

Shabbos versus Yomim Nora’im

On weekdays, when the chazzan receives the sefer Torah, he invites the community to join him, reciting the posuk, Gadlu laHashem iti uneromemah Shemo yachdav (Tehillim 34:4), “Join me in declaring the greatness of Hashem: thereby, we shall exalt His Name, together.” On Shabbos and Yom Tov, two other pesukim are recited before the posuk Gadlu, both of which are recited first by the chazzan and then by the community in unison: the posuk of Shema Yisrael, and then the praise Echad Elokeinu, gadol Adoneinu, Kadosh Shemo, “Our G-d is one, Our Lord is great, His Name is Holy.” This last passage is not a pasuk in Tanach, but a praise that has its origin in Mesechta Sofrim (Chapter 14). (We should note that the procedure described in Mesechta Sofrim varies somewhat from our practice.)

On Shabbos, these two pesukim are recited only in the morning, but not at Mincha. The Aruch Hashulchan writes that he is uncertain why this is so (Orach Chayim 292:2).

When the chazzan recites the word Gadlu, he should bend over a little bit, reminiscent of bowing (Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chayim 282:1), although other authorities disagree with this practice, noting that one is not permitted to add additional bowings to our davening (Biur Hagra, Orach Chayim 56:10).

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the practice is to add the word venora (awesome) to the posuk Echad Elokeinu, so that it reads Echad Elokeinu gadol

Adoneinu, Kadosh veNora Shemo. “Our G-d is One, our Lord is Great, His Name is Holy and Awesome!”

Notwithstanding that our standard practice is to add the word veNora only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many authorities contend that the word veNora should be added also on Shabbos and other Yomim Tovim (Elyah Rabbah 134:4; Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 134:4). Mesechta Sofrim, the major source introducing this praise, mentions this practice, as does Rav Amram Gaon. Follow the leader

The Shulchan Aruch mentions a practice, followed in most Sefardic congregations, that the entire tzibur follows the sefer Torah as it is removed from the aron hakodesh and brought to the shulchan from where it will be read. This is an honor for the sefer Torah, in that everyone follows it like an honored guest. The source for this practice is in Mesechta Sofrim (Chapter 14). However, when this is not a standard custom in the shul in which you are davening, there are authorities who feel that it is better to refrain from this practice, because it gives an impression of yohara, halachic conceit (Aruch Hashulchan 282:1).

Stand up for the Torah!

While the sefer Torah is moving, there is a requirement min haTorah to stand up and remain standing in its honor. This is derived by the Gemara (Kiddushin 33b) in the following way: The Torah requires that we stand when a talmid chacham walks by. The source for this law is the words in parshas Kedoshim, takum vehadarta pnei zakein, “You must rise and treat with respect the presence of an elder,” and Chazal explain that the term “elder” means someone worthy of respect because of his learning, even if he is still young. On the basis of a kal vechomer, the Gemara proves that it is a mitzvah min haTorah to show the same level of respect for the Torah itself: if we must stand for someone who studied the Torah, we must certainly stand for the Torah itself.

Conclusion

In the introduction to Sefer Hachinuch, the author writes that the main mitzvah upon which all the other mitzvos rest is that of Talmud Torah. Through Torah learning, a person will know how to fulfill all of the other mitzvos. That is why Chazal instituted a public reading of a portion of the Torah every Shabbos, twice, and on Mondays and Thursdays. Knowing that the proper observance of all the mitzvos is contingent on Torah

learning, our attention to keriyas haTorah will be heightened. According the Torah reading the great respect it is due should increase our sensitivity to the observance of all the mitzvos.

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Why Leaders Become Corrupt (Shlach)

Rabbi Ben-Tzion Spitz

Power will intoxicate the best hearts, as wine the strongest heads. - Charles Caleb Colton

Moses selects twelve men, twelve princes of Israel to scout the land of Canaan, the land God promised to the nation of Israel. The princes are named. Each one was a great leader. Not only were they great leaders, the rabbinic tradition holds that they were also righteous men. However, between their appointment and their report on what they saw in the land of Canaan, something happened. Something that led them to sin so gravely that they sowed panic and dissension within the nation of Israel. They repudiated Moses' leadership and God's omnipotence and brought upon the entire nation the punishment of forty years of wandering in the desert. The Chidushei HaRim on Numbers 13:2 wonders how this transformation occurred. How did ten of the most important men of Israel's leadership, ten righteous men fall so low, so fast?

He explains that it had to do with the people. It was not only their appointment and the power it represented that corrupted these previously righteous men. It was the people they represented. Somehow, by having some level of representation of the people, the princes picked up on the people's intentions. The problem was that a certain percentage of the population didn't want to enter the Promised Land. They had tired of the desert, of Moses' leadership and of God's presence in their lives. They wanted to be free of those, and ironically, return to the slavery and the familiarity of Egypt. Those rebellious intentions somehow infected the previously righteous leaders once they were appointed. That tainted the princes' scouting mission from the start. Their scouting of the land of Canaan commenced with an intention to sabotage the planned entry into the land.

However, two princes were spared from the conspiracy and demonstrated greater strength of character and loyalty. Those were Joshua and Caleb. Before Joshua had departed on the mission, Moses renamed Joshua (in Hebrew, he changed it from Hoshea to Yehoshua) by including a part of God's name in Joshua's name. Caleb went to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron to pray at their graves. It seems that by binding oneself so firmly to God that it becomes a part of one's name and identity, as well as intense prayer calling on the merits of our forefathers somehow deflected the negative influences of the crowd on those two leaders.

May we always seek ways to deflect the corruption and negative influences we may find.

Dedication - To the induction of Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon as the Rabbi of Gush Etzion. Shabbat Shalom Ben-Tzion Spitz is a former Chief Rabbi of Uruguay. He is the author of three books of Biblical Fiction and over 600 articles and stories dealing with biblical themes.

from: Ben Olam Haba <ben@halachafortoday.com>

date: Jun 23, 2022, 8:15 PM

subject: Week In Review: Week of Parashas Shelach 5782

Halacha For Today: Week In Review

Week of Parashas Shelach 5782

(Parashas Korach in Eretz Yisroel)

Week of Parashas Shelach 5782

CURRENT TOPIC: HILCHOS SEUDAH - MEALS & FOOD

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Halachos for Sunday, June 19, 2022

1) It is imperative for a Yid to eat with Derech Eretz, in a dignified way.

According to the Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos, Lo Ta'aseh 195) and other Poskim, eating in a non dignified manner may be a transgression of one or more biblical commandments. (See Aruch HaShulchan Siman 157:1 and Elya Rabbah Siman 170:23 what he quotes from the Shl"a)

2) One should ideally not eat while standing. (Rambam Hilchos Dayos 4:3. See also Ben Ish Chai Parshas B'Har Siman 11)

L'Chatchila, it is also best not to drink while standing. Though many people are not stringent with this and they

do have on whom to rely, the AriZal was very careful with this. (Mishna Berura Siman 296:6. See also Shu"t Rav P'Alim Vol. 2 Siman 45)

Some Poskim maintain that only Talmidei Chachamim (Torah scholars) need to be stringent not to drink while standing, but other people need not be stringent with this. (See Shulchan Aruch Harav Siman 296:15. Though, from his language it seems that even non Talmidei Chachamim should try and emulate the Talmidei Chachamim in this matter when possible)

Halachos for Monday, June 20, 2022

1) One should not eat in the street, in public, as doing so is an indication that one has no shame, and can even lead to being disqualified as a witness in a Jewish court of law. (See Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat Siman 34:18, based on the Talmud (Kiddushin 40b) that says that one who eats in public is likened to a dog.)

2) One should not drink an entire [normal sized] cup of wine in one gulp, as doing so seems like a gluttonous way to drink (Gargaran).

Nor should it be drunk in too many sips, as that seems haughty, rather the proper way to drink it is in two gulps. If the cup is very small (less than a Revi'is), then it may be finished in one gulp. If the cup is larger than normal, it may be finished in more than two gulps. (Shulchan Aruch and Ram'a Siman 170:8. See Mishna Berura S"K 20-22 for some other exclusions)

Some Poskim maintain that by Kiddush and Havdalah the above doesn't apply, and the entire Becher of wine may be drunk in one gulp. (See Shu"t Mishne Halachos Vol. 8 Siman 33)

Soft drinks, juices, water or other drinks are not subject to the above Halacha, as it only pertains to wine.

Halachos for Tuesday, June 21, 2022

1) It is proper to leave over a little bit of what was in your plate, and not totally finish everything down to the last crumb. (See Ben Ish Chai Parshas B'Har Siman 14 and Sefer Eitz Hasadeh Chapter 19:13 quoting Rav Chaim Kanievsky Zatzal that it is good to be stringent with this.) One who took a bite out of a piece of bread [or other food items], should not put it back in middle of the table, as it is unappetizing to other people and they will not eat from it after it was bitten from. Rather he/she should make sure to finish the entire piece. (Mishna Berura 170:36)

2) During the meal, it is important to refrain from doing things that may disgust others at the table, such as killing a fly on the table. (Sha'ar HaTziyun 167:26)

One should not spit, burp, blow their nose loudly, or do similar things, in front of another person at the table. (See Aruch HaShulchan Siman 170:12 that these things should not be done in front of others anytime, even not during a meal, based on the Talmud Chagiga 5a and Eiruvin 99a) One whose hands are unclean should not eat at a table with others. (Kaf HaChaim 163:14)

It is important to ensure that children do not touch the food in the serving plates on the table directly with their hands, as they are usually unclean, and as such will disgust the adults at the table. (Sefer Chasidim Siman 829)

Many people refrain from allowing small children to sit and/or stand on a table. (Based on an incident brought in the Sefer Chasidim Siman 920, for reasons of Sakana, danger)

Halachos for Wednesday, June 22, 2022

1) After eating fish, before eating meat or chicken (and vice versa), many people are stringent to wash their hands, as not doing so may lead to danger (and we are more stringent with danger than with Halachic prohibitions; See Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah Siman 116)

However, nowadays many Poskim are lenient with the above as they maintain that certain circumstances changed from the times of the Talmud, and it is no longer a Sakana, danger (Mogen Avraham, quoted in Mishna Berura 173:3. See also Shu"t Shevet Haleivi Vol. 6 Siman 111. The Kaf HaChaim 173:4 and others argue with the Mogen Avraham and maintain that it is still in force nowadays and pasken that it is still required)

2) Even those who are lenient with washing the hands, should eat or drink something to separate between the fish and the meat.

(Mishna Berura 173:4)

Those who are stringent and wash, do not need to wash with all the requirements of Netilas Yadayim (utensil, Chatzitzah etc.), they simply need to "rinse off" the hands, and dry them (as it is repulsive to eat with wet hands) before resuming to eat. (Mishna Berura 173:6)

Halachos for Thursday, June 23, 2022

1) Food (raw or cooked) or drink that was stored under a bed that someone slept on , even if they were covered,

should not be eaten, as a Ruach Ra, impure spirit, rests on this food/drink. (Aruch HaShulchan Siman 165:4 based on the Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah Siman 116:5. See also Shulchan Aruch HaRav Hilchos Shmiras HaGuf V'Hanefesh Siman 67, Chachmas Adam Siman 68:3. The Gaon of Vilna was also extremely stringent with this.) Even if the food was in a utensil, and that utensil was covered by another utensil, it still gets the Ruach Ra and should not be eaten even B'Dieved. (Psak of Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach Zatzal in Halichos Shlomo Perek 13:17)

The prohibition applies to vitamins as well as food, but does not apply to medicines. (ibid. footnote 27)

Therefore, it is important to not store food there, and thus necessitate discarding them and transgressing the sin of Bal Tashchis, wasting food.

2) Some Poskim are lenient in cases of great monetary loss and allow the food to be eaten, B'Dieved. (Based on Psak of the Shvus Yaakov quoted in the Pirush of Rav Akiva Eiger, Pishei Teshuva and Yad Efraim to Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 116:4 and 5.)

As always, for Halacha L'Ma'aseh a Rav should be consulted.

Halachos for Erev Shabbos Kodesh, June 24, 2022

Double Portion L'Kavod Shabbos Kodesh

Halachos for Erev Shabbos Kodesh

1) Some people do not eat food or drink that was in a bathroom. (See Likutei MaHarich Seder Hanhogas HaSeuda Dibur Hamaschil H'Ochel Pas in the name of MaHarsh of Belz)

However, according to most Poskim there is no Halachic problem with eating food that was in a bathroom.

Still, it is best not to bring food/drink into a bathroom as doing so is a Bizayon, an act of disrespect. (See Mogen Avraham Siman 166:3, Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer Vol.14 Siman 2, Shu"t Be'er Moshe Vol. 5 Siman 1 and Shu"t Har Tzvi Vol. 1 Siman 50. See also Shu"t Yabia Omer Vol. 3 Siman 1 and Vol. 4 Siman5)

2) The above is only for the room that has the toilet, and does not apply to a room that has in it a only a bath/shower with no toilet, as in such a room it is permitted to store food. (See Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos Vol. 1 Siman 11 and Sefer Ishei Yisrael Perek 53 footnote 82 where he quotes Rav Chaim Kanievsky Zatzal saying that the Chazon Ish Zatzal stored food in a bathtub that was in a room without a toilet)

Storing medicines in a medicine cabinet in a bathroom is permitted (Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos ibid.)

However, actually eating or drinking in a bathroom is prohibited according to everyone. (Be'er Heitev Siman 3:2)

Halachos for Shabbos Kodesh

1) One who causes food or drink to become ruined transgresses two sins:

a) Bal Tashchis, the prohibition against destroying any useful item [in a destructive manner] (See Rambam Hilchos Brochos Perek 7:9 and Hilchos Melochim Perek 6:8.)

b) Bizui Ochlin, a separate prohibition against destroying food/drink, or treating them disrespectfully.

The reason behind this prohibition is that doing so is being ungrateful to Hashem Who has bestowed so much good into this world. (See Rashi to Taanis 20b Dibur HaMaschil Ain Ma'achilin Oso L'Behaima. See also Rabbeinu Yona in Sha'arei Teshuva Sha'ar 3 Os 230 regarding the severity of destroying, or even talking bad about, Hashem's food)

2) It is especially important not to discard or ruin bread, if it is a piece larger than a Kzayis. (Shulchan Aruch Siman 180:3)

If the bread is no longer edible, it may be discarded, though according to many Poskim it may be best to feed to the birds instead of discarding it. (See Chaye Adam Klal 45:5 who quotes a Zohar that is stringent even with crumbs, not to discard them)

If bread [or other food] must be thrown out, it should be wrapped respectfully (e.g. in a bag or piece of paper) and then discarded. (See Sefer V'Zos Habracha end of Chapter 2)

Crumbs [that collectively are less than a Kzayis] may be discarded, but should not be stepped on or otherwise treated disrespectfully, as doing so may lead to poverty. (Mishna Berura Siman 180:10)

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date: Jun 23, 2022, 6:59 AM

subject: Dimensions in Korach

DIMENSIONS IN CHUMASH

Korach Saving On

Korach took... and On, son of Peles.[1]

One of the most enigmatic members of Korach's team is On, son of Peles. After being mentioned by name in the opening verse of our parsha, he is never mentioned again. In explanation of this phenomenon, the Gemara informs us that his wife convinced him to withdraw from his participation in Korach's dispute:

She said to him: what difference does it make for you? If the one [Moshe] is the leader, you are a follower, and if the other [Korach] is the leader, you will be a follower!

Having convinced On that he had nothing to gain from being involved with Korach, his wife proceeded to extricate him from Korach's assembly, thereby saving his life. The question is: what was it about On's wife's words that caused him to change his mind? What exactly did she say that he had not already considered? Did he originally think that if Korach succeeded then he, On, would be the leader?

Apparently, On was of the understanding that if Korach succeeded, it would better his situation. After all, Korach's claim to Moshe was: "For the entire assembly are holy, and Hashem is in their midst, and why do you lord over the congregation of Hashem?"[2] It sounds as if Korach was claiming that there should be no leaders or followers in the Jewish people, only equals! If so, then to side with Korach could potentially bring about an improvement in On's status.

To this end, his wife enlightened him: Do not be fooled into thinking that if Korach wins there will be no more leaders. If he wins, and becomes the "first comrade", he will effectively be the new leader. Either way, you will remain a follower, and will have gained nothing. On's wife thus has the distinction of realizing centuries ago that even when everyone is equal, some people will be more equal than others, and no one more so than the one who preaches that equality.

From the World of Remez: Between the Eidah and the Kahal

On the morrow of Korach's uprising, during which he and his men were killed, the people once again complain. In response to this, a plague breaks out, which is only stopped by Aharon taking ketores (incense) and running into the midst of the assembly. There are some verses describing these two days which are quite similar to each other in theme and content, but which nevertheless contain some differences in their phraseology.

1. On day one of Korach's rebellion, Moshe and Aharon are told: “הַבָּדוּ מִתְוֹךְ הַעֲדָה” – separate yourselves from amid this assembly.”[3] On day two, the verse says: “הַרְמָנוּ מִתְוֹךְ הַעֲדָה” – remove yourselves from the assembly.”[4] What is the difference between “הַבָּדוּ” and “הַרְמָנוּ”?
2. In both of the above verses, the offending assembly is called “עֲדָה – an assembly,” whereas when Aharon takes the ketores, the verse says, “וַיַּרְא אֶל תָּזַר קָרְבָּן” – he ran into the midst of the congregation.”[5] Why does the reference change from “עֲדָה” to “קָרְבָּן”?

After the plague had been halted, the verse says:[6]
וַיָּהֵי הַמְתִים בְּמִגְפָּה אַרְבָּעָה שָׁנָר אֶלָּפֶן וְשָׁבָעْ מֵאוֹת קָלְבָּד הַמְתִים עַל קָרְבָּן קָרְבָּן

Those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, aside from those who died on account of the matter of Korach.

Why does the verse need to emphasize that the number who died on the second day was aside from those who died on the first day? Isn't it obvious?

R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin reveals an entirely new dimension in these verses. We know that on account of Aharon bringing the ketores among the people, the plague stopped. Now, we are not told exactly how many more people would have died had Aharon not stopped the plague, but perhaps we can find out...

On the first day, the entire Jewish people were under the decree of being wiped out, but this was rescinded when Moshe pleaded for mercy on their behalf. On the second day, when the complaining persisted, the original decree of destruction was brought back. Here, too, however, there was a measure of mercy, whereby instead of the entire people being wiped out, they would be represented by a core group of people. The smallest representation of an entity in Torah is Terumah (תרומה). In this instance, in order to take the place of the entire nation, the Terumah had to be the most desired amount, which is one fortieth. This is why, on the second day, Hashem did not use the original term “הַבָּדוּ” to denote separation, but rather the term “הַרְמָנוּ”, which is related to the word “תרומה”.

How much is “Terumah” of the Jewish people? The counting of the people in Parshas Bamidbar tells us that they numbered 603,550. A fortieth of that number is 15,088. From whom was this number comprised? The verse informs us that those who died in the plague were 14,700. This leaves 388. However, since this was

essentially the same decree as that of the first day, those who died on that day are also reckoned in this amount. This is why the verse specifies that those who died in the plague were “aside from those who died relating to the matter of Korach.”

And how many people died on the first day? There was Korach himself, Dasan and Aviram and the 250 men, totaling 253. Adding this to the 14,700 of the second day gives us 14,953. However, this still does not give us the total of 15,088, for there are still 135 missing. What happened to them? The answer is, these men were the ones who were spared by Aharon taking the ketores and running into the midst of the people. We noted that, unlike the earlier verse which uses the term “עֲדָה”, this verse says that he ran into the midst of the “קָרְבָּן”. Why the shift in phraseology? Because the numerical value (gematria) of the word “קָרְבָּן” is 135, indicating the number of people who were saved by this act.

A different level!

[1] Bamidbar 16:1. [2] Bamidbar 16:3. [3] 16:21. [4] 17:10. [5] 17:12. [6] 17:14.

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