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Rav Yissocher Frand - Parshas Shlach **"Anshei Midos" — Men of Great Character**

One of the perplexing problems we face when studying Sefer Bamidbar is: What happened to Klal Yisrael? What happened to the "Generation of Knowledge," to the generation that literally heard and saw the Ribono shel Olam on a daily basis? How could they act the way they acted several times throughout the Book of Bamidbar?

Prominent among these problematic incidents is the incident of the Spies (Meraglim). This is one of the more difficult chapters to understand. What exactly happened to the Meraglim? How could people whom the Torah describes as being "kulam anashim" (all of them "distinguished" — see Rashi here) come back with such a negative report about Eretz Yisrael, which caused not only the entire generation to die in the Wilderness, but it introduced the entire concept of "Galus" [exile] into the Jewish experience? We have developed the idea in past years that the reason we are in Galus today, ultimately traces back to the sin of the Spies.

Over the years, we have suggested many different approaches to understand what exactly the Spies did wrong. The Shalo"h HaKodosh on this week's parsha makes a very perplexing comment. Among the libelous charges the spies made about Eretz Yisrael was that it was an *erezt ocheles yosh'veha* [a Land that consumes its inhabitants] and that all the people they saw there were *anshei midos* [men of great measure]. On a simple level, the term "anshei midos" means they were very big people. They were giants. They were scary. This put fear into the hearts of the Meraglim. They felt that with such people defending the land for the Canaanites, Israel would not be able to conquer it.

The Shalo"h HaKodosh interprets differently. He explains that "anshei midos" means that the native inhabitants of Canaan were people of good character traits (*ba'alei midos tovot*). Today, when we speak of someone as being a "ba'al midos" it does not mean that the fellow is 6'7". It means he is a mensch, a decent and upright person with sterling character. This is exactly how the Shalo"h interprets the report of the Meraglim about the native inhabitants of Canaan — they were not giants. They were men who

possessed good midos! How does this fit with the rest of the parsha? What is the deeper meaning of the Shaloh's interpretation?

There is an entire body of thought from a wide range of commentaries (Chassidische, Misnagdishe, etc.) that have an entirely different spin on the Spies. They were not evil people. They were in fact *kulam anashim* — people of great stature. Their reports were not damning Eretz Yisrael. No condemnation of the Chosen Land was intended whatsoever. However, they had concerns that the Jewish people would have a terrible spiritual descent if they went into Eretz Yisrael. They noticed things on their visit which worried them, and consequently, "I'Shem Shamayim" they attempted to preempt future problems by discouraging the plan to enter the Land. Everything in the parsha is taken by this group of commentaries in a totally different light. For instance, how can the pasuk "a land that consumes its inhabitants" be a positive statement? The Ba'al Shem Tov, among others, interprets the report as meaning that it is such a "gashmiyusdike land" (for example: fertile, booming economy, such wonderful fruits, etc.) that if Klal Yisrael will migrate there, they will inevitably get caught up in the rat race of materialism. The Ba'al Shem Tov interprets the expression "erezt ocheles yoshveha" by emphasizing that the "artzius" (extreme physicality and beauty) of the land will consume the population. This was not a bad report. This was a perceptive reading of the fact that the inherent physical blessings of the place might involve spiritual risk.

Perhaps we can compare this to the situation eighty to a hundred years ago in Eastern Europe where many Gedolei Yisrael were very hesitant to send Jews to America. Why? "The Goldene Medina!" What is wrong with a "Goldene Medina?" The problem is that people get wrapped up in the gold, that other important things seem to lose their significance. This is just an example. If we accept this approach, then we can understand where the Shalo"h HaKodosh is coming from when he interprets "anshei midos" as men of great character. He means to say that the inhabitants of the Land of Israel are such wonderful people, that Klal Yisrael will be unduly influenced by them, to the spiritual detriment of Israel. It is precisely because there are such wonderful people there that the spies foresaw a problem. The Jews will be attracted to them. They will want to establish business and social relationships with them. Ultimately, they will be influenced by them, by virtue of the fact that they are such wonderful people.

This is what the Shalo"h means. Yes. Men of Middos! The Spies were I'Shem Shamayim. They were afraid that if Klal Yisrael proceeded into Eretz Yisrael, they would have a spiritual decline. In the Wilderness, they were secure. They did not need to worry about making a living. They did not need to worry about materialism — about clothing or food or any of that. They lived a life of complete spirituality. They would be going into Eretz Yisrael where the fruit is delicious and the land is beautiful. It is so overwhelmingly beautiful that it "eats up its inhabitants" in terms of arousing their desires for physicality and materialism. And on top of that, the locals are "men of character." The Jews will not be able to avoid assimilation and getting caught up by the "good life" inherent in the local culture. That was the motivation of the Meraglim.

Why the Calculation of "Forty Years for Forty Days"?

The Almighty pronounced the following terrible decree upon the Jewish people for the sin of the Spies: "Like the number of the days that you spied out the land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year, shall you bear your iniquities — forty years — and you shall know what parting from Me [is]" [Bamidbar 14:34]. Instead of moving on directly to the Land of Israel, they were to remain 40 years in the desert. Why 40 years? For every day the Spies were in Eretz Yisrael gathering their negative reports [i.e., according to the conventional way of understanding the Spies' actions, not the "deeper" approach outlined above], they would need to spend a corresponding 365-day period wandering in the desert before they could enter Eretz Yisrael. Rav Asher Weiss asks a simple question. The actual sin of the Spies occurred when they returned and delivered their negative report, on that infamous Erev Tisha B'Av. The report was delivered in at most one day. For the previous 39 days or even for the entire 40-day period they did not report

anything. They did not do any damage. They were merely gathering information. How then do we understand this correlation of 40 years for 40 days? Their sin lasted for at most one day, not 40 days!

It was not like today when they would be able to call back to the camp every day on their cell phones with bad tidings about the Land. They did not Twitter. They did not post updates on Facebook. There was not any communication whatsoever until they returned to the camp after the 40-day sojourn! They come back one day, they speak ill for a few hours at most and that is that. Why were they punished “a year for each day”?

Rav Asher Weiss answers by citing a rule we have cited many times in the past. The sin of lashon harah is not a sin only of the mouth. It is a sin of the eyes as well — a sin in how one perceives things. Two people can see virtually the same thing and view it in totally different ways. The reason the punishment was “40 years for 40 days” is because for 40 days the Spies looked negatively at Eretz Yisrael. Everything they saw was processed with a jaundiced view. Chazal say (again, according to the “simple interpretation”) that the expression “A land that devours its inhabitants” reflects the fact that they saw funerals every day. Rather than seeing this as the Hand of G-d who wanted the inhabitants to be preoccupied with burying their dead so that they would not notice the spies, they saw it as a sign that the land was inhospitable, and caused the premature death of its inhabitants. For forty days, their perception was with a negative view. Therefore, when they came back and delivered their report to the nation, we are not talking about a sin whose duration was a few hours or at most a day. Their report was the climax of 40 complete days of jaundiced processing on their part of everything having to do with the Land of Israel. It was 40 days of misperception; 40 days of cynicism; 40 days of being negative; 40 days of lashon harah. The punishment for that was 40 years of wandering – a year for each day!

He contrasts two opposing views of the world:

The first is that of the German philosophers: “If one looks at nature, what does one see? Someone goes to the jungle, to Africa, and sees how life is on the plains, on the savannahs of Africa. It is a matter of survival of the fittest. The lion eats the antelope or the buck. The antelopes which are fast enough get away, and the ones who don’t run fast enough do not survive. This is survival of the fittest in action. The bigger fish eat the little fish and the still bigger fish eat those fish. Nature is based on the concept of survival of the fittest. The world runs on the Talmudic principle of “kol d’alim gavar” [w/whoever is stronger wins] We can understand what such a philosophy of the world can lead to. That is one way of looking at the world.

The other philosophy is that of the Rabbis of the Talmud. The Gemara says “Were the Torah not given, we would have learned modesty (tznius) from cats; property rights (gezel) from ants; chastity and fidelity (arayos) from doves; and proper behavior (derech eretz) from roosters [E[Erubin 100b]/p> Here are two views of the animal kingdom — that of the “German philosophers” and that of the Rabbis of the Talmud. One perspective sees “might is right” and “survival of the fittest” and bases their philosophy on their view of nature. Rabbi Yochanon looks at the animal Kingdom and says “Look at this little ant. It will not take a crumb that does not belong to it from another ant. Look at what the cat does, after it takes care of its bodily needs, look at its modesty. Look at the dove — she mates for life with the same bird and will not take another mate even after her first mate dies.” He looks at the same animal kingdom as do the “German philosophers” and sees fidelity, modesty, and ethical behavior. It all depends how one views matters. Lashon harah is referred to by Chazal as “eyna bisha” — a bad eye. That is where it all starts. It all starts with perception. The baal lashon harah always views things negatively. Therefore, the meraglim, who spent 40 days looking at Eretz Yisrael in a negative light, did not merely commit a crime of one night’s worth of lashon haRah. It was a culmination of 40 days of not looking at things the way one can and should. As a result of their jaundiced view, they gave a damning report about Eretz Yisrael.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter

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**Seeing What Isn’t There – Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
Shelach Lecha 5778**

In Philadelphia there lives a gentle, gracious, grey-haired man, by now in his late-90s, whom Elaine and I have had the pleasure of meeting several times and who is one of the most lovely people we have ever known. Many people have reason to be thankful to him, because his work has transformed many lives, rescuing people from depression and other debilitating psychological states.

His name is Aaron T. Beck and he is the founder of one of the most effective forms of psychotherapy yet devised: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. He discovered it through his work at the depression research clinic he founded in the University of Pennsylvania. He began to detect a pattern among his patients. It had to do with the way they interpreted events. They did so in negative ways that were damaging to their self-respect, and fatalistic. It was as if they had thought themselves into a condition that one of Beck’s most brilliant disciples, Martin Seligman, was later to call “learned helplessness.” Essentially they kept telling themselves, “I am a failure. Nothing I try ever succeeds. I am useless. Things will never change.”

They had these thoughts automatically. They were their default reaction to anything that went wrong in their lives. But Beck found that if they became conscious of these thoughts, saw how unjustified they were, and developed different and more realistic thought patterns, they could, in effect, cure themselves. This also turns out to be a revelatory way of understanding the key episode of our parsha, namely the story of the spies.

Recall what happened. Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land. The men were leaders, princes of their tribes, people of distinction. Yet ten of them came back with a demoralising report. The land, they said, is indeed good. It does flow with milk and honey. But the people are strong. The cities are large and well fortified. Caleb tried to calm the people. “We can do it.” But the ten said that it could not be done. The people are stronger than we are. They are giants. We are grasshoppers.

And so the terrible event happened. The people lost heart. “If only,” they said, “we had died in Egypt. Let us choose a leader and go back.” God became angry. Moses pleaded for mercy. God relented, but insisted that none of that generation, with the sole exceptions of the two dissenting spies, Caleb and Joshua, would live to enter the land. The people would stay in the wilderness for forty years, and there they would die. Their children would eventually inherit what might have been theirs had they only had faith. Essential to understanding this passage is the fact that the report of the ten spies was utterly unfounded. Only much later, in the book of Joshua, when Joshua himself sent spies, did they learn from the woman who sheltered them, Rahab, what actually happened when the inhabitants of the land heard that the Israelites were coming:

“I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you ... As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you.” (Josh. 2:9-11)

The spies were terrified of the Canaanites, and entirely failed to realise that the Canaanites were terrified of them. How could they make such a profound mistake? For this we turn to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and to some of the types of distorted thinking identified by Beck’s student, David Burns.

One is all-or-nothing thinking. Everything is either black or white, good or bad, easy or impossible. That was the spies' verdict on the possibility of conquest. It couldn't be done. There was no room for shading, nuance, complexity. They could have said, "It will be difficult, we will need courage and skill, but with God's help we will prevail." But they did not. Their thinking was a polarised either/or.

Another is negative filtering. We discount the positives as being insignificant, and focus almost exclusively on the negatives. The spies began by noting the positives: "The land is good. Look at its fruit." Then came the "but": the long string of negatives, drowning out the good news and leaving an overwhelmingly negative impression.

A third is catastrophising, expecting disaster to strike, no matter what. That is what the people did when they said, "Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us die by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder."

A fourth is mind-reading. We assume we know what other people are thinking, when usually we are completely wrong because we are jumping to conclusions about them based on our own feelings, not theirs. That is what the spies did when they said, "We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so we seemed to them." They had no way of knowing how they appeared to the people of the land, but they attributed to them, mistakenly, a sentiment based on their own subjective fears.

A fifth is inability to disconfirm. You reject any evidence or argument that might contradict your negative thoughts. The spies heard the counter-argument of Caleb but dismissed it. They had decided that any attempt to conquer the land would fail, and they were simply not open to any other interpretation of the facts.

A sixth is emotional reasoning: letting your feelings, rather than careful deliberation, dictate your thinking. A key example is the interpretation the spies placed on the fact that the cities were "fortified and very large" (Num. 13:28), or "with walls up to the sky" (Deut. 1:28). They did not stop to think that people who need high city walls to protect them are in fact fearful. Had they stopped to think, they might have realised that the Canaanites were not confident, not giants, not invulnerable. But they let their emotions substitute for thought.

A seventh is blame. We accuse someone else of being responsible for our predicament instead of accepting responsibility ourselves. This is what the people did in the wake of the spies' report. "They grumbled against Moses and Aaron" (Num. 14:1), as if to say, "It is all your fault. If only you had let us stay in Egypt!" People who blame others have already begun down the road to "learned helplessness." They see themselves as powerless to change. They are the passive victims of forces beyond their control.

Applying cognitive behavioural therapy to the story of the spies lets us see how that ancient event might be relevant to us, here, now. It is very easy to fall into these and other forms of cognitive distortion, and the result can be depression and despair – dangerous states of mind that need immediate medical or therapeutic attention.

What I find profoundly moving is the therapy the Torah itself prescribes. I have pointed out elsewhere that the end of the parsha – the paragraph dealing with tzitzit – is connected to the episode of the spies by two keywords, ure-item, "you shall see" (Num. 13:18; 15:39), and the verb latur, (Num. 13:2, 16, 17, 25, 32; 15:39). The key sentence is the one that says about the thread of blue in the tzitzit, that "when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes" (Num. 15:39).

Note the strange order of the parts of the body. Normally we would expect it to be the other way around: as Rashi says in his commentary to the verse, "The eye sees and the heart desires." First we see, then we feel. But in fact the Torah reverses the order, thus anticipating the very point Cognitive Behavioural Therapy makes, which is that often our feelings distort our perception. We see what we fear – and often what we think we see is not there at all. Hence Roosevelt's famous words in his first Inaugural Address – stunningly relevant to the story of the spies: "the only thing we have to fear

is...fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyses needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

The blue thread in the tzitzit, says the Talmud (Sotah 17a), is there to remind us of the sea, the sky, and God's throne of glory. Techelet, the blue itself, was in the ancient world the mark of royalty. Thus the tzitzit as itself a form of cognitive behavioural therapy, saying: "Do not be afraid. God is with you. And do not give way to your emotions, because you are royalty: you are children of the King."

Hence the life-changing idea: never let negative emotions distort your perceptions. You are not a grasshopper. Those who oppose you are not giants. To see the world as it is, not as you are afraid it might be, let faith banish fear.

Shabbat Shalom.

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Weekly Parsha SHLACH

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

In our current democratically oriented mindset we subscribe to the tenant that majority rules. Because of this mentality, many times the opinion of the minority is never taken seriously or properly assessed. Yet, throughout world and Jewish history apparently the majority opinion was not always the correct one, and harmful consequences followed from its adoption

The Talmud therefore is always careful to preserve the minority opinion even when the normative practice of Judaism does not. It explains that there perhaps will come a time when circumstances will dictate that the minority opinion will be correct and should be implemented. The flaw in always following the majority opinion is patently illustrated for us in the Torah reading of this week.

The majority opinion, by a vote of 10 to 2, rejected the entry of the Jewish people into the land of Israel, despite God's promises and the entreaties of Moshe. Yet, all Jewish history is based on the minority opinion being the correct one and that following the majority only doomed a generation to a seemingly useless death in the desert of Sinai. Apparently, God's will, so to speak, and the trajectory of history is not subject to a majority vote.

A Jewish Congressman famously stated a century ago that God and one constitute a majority. Truth, wisdom, measured action and a vision for the future are not subject to be overturned by a temporary majority opinion. The fact that there it is a Jewish people and a Jewish state in the world today testifies to the eternity of a holy and wise minority opinion.

As human beings who do not have the gift of prophecy and often find it impossible to foretell the future, following the majority opinion is comforting and reassuring. We were brought up on the slogan that 50 million Frenchmen cannot be wrong. Well, they have been very wrong many times over this past century. While we do not want to ignore the wishes of the majority, as there is power and a modicum of truth in numbers, when it comes to matters of faith and historic vision, the rules of majority and minority must be cast aside.

Common sense and historical experience coupled with strong beliefs and traditional faith should move the day when making decisions and policies. Many a leader has been faced with making unpopular decisions for the preservation and welfare of his people. We are told that King Saul lost his crown because he told the prophet Samuel that he had to bow to popular demand instead of heeding God's commandment. In Saul's case, following the majority opinion regarding the spies in this week's Torah reading, proved disastrous. We, who live in a society where majority rules, should bear this caveat in mind.

Shabbat shalom

Rabbi Berel Wein

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim
From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva
Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Traveling to Uman to the Grave of Rebbe Nachman

Q: Is it permissible to travel from the Land of Israel to Uman (Ukraine) to visit the grave of Rebbe Nachman? What about for one who lives outside of Israel? Whether on Rosh Hashanah or during the rest of the year?

A: This is a new "custom" based on the statement of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov: "Anyone who visits my grave and gives eighteen coins to Tzedakah will merit life in the World to Come." One may only leave Israel for a Mitzvah (see Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 5:9 and Tosafot to Avodah Zarah 13a). Anyone who violates this, we hope that he will repent. Worse than this is one who travels under the impression that he is performing a Mitzvah, because how will he then repent?! Visiting the graves of Tzadikim (righteous people) is not defined as a Mitzvah – not a rabbinic Mitzvah and not a Torah Mitzvah; it is a positive act. Based on this, Maran Ha-Rav Kook ruled that we do not leave Israel to visit the graves of Tzadikim and he wrote "are we without graves in the Land of Israel that you travel to the Exile?!" (Shut Mishpat Cohain #147).

It is true that Rebbe Nachman said: "Anyone who visits my grave and gives eighteen coins to Tzedakah will merit life in the world to come," but Avraham Avinu is greater than Rebbe Nachman. Rebbe Nachman himself said this. Anyone who goes to Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah in Hevron and gives eighteen gold coins can be certain that Avraham Avinu will aid him. Furthermore, know that the Land of Israel is holier than Uman. Rebbe Nachman himself said this.

Also know that it is not enough to visit a grave and give eighteen coins to Tzedakah to be worthy of life in the World to Come, but one needs to perform acts of loving-kindness, learn Torah and perform the Mitzvot. And it is not proper to spend thousands of shekels to travel there. You should give the money to Tzedakah. The value of traveling there is unclear, but giving Tzedakah is clear, it is an explicit verse in the Torah.

Also, if you leave your wife alone and sad on Rosh Hashanah, know that you will not leave guilt-free from the Heavenly Court.

The custom of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was to stand across from the national cemetery on Mt. Herzl and say: "These are the graves of the righteous who died sanctifying Hashem's Name. Why should I travel far distances?"

Therefore, go to Ma'arat Ha-Machpelah.

[Note: A collection of other leading Rabbi's statements on this issue – Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu: "It is not proper to leave Israel on Rosh Hashanah or during the rest of the year, and it is preferable for one who wants to pray at the graves of Tzadikim to visit the graves of Tzadikim in the Land of Israel – Hevron, Kever Rachel, Kever Rashbi – who was the teacher of Rebbe Nachman, etc... – and not to leave Israel for the impurity of the lands of the other nations."

Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv: "Go daven at the Kotel."

Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef: "How did the grave of Rebbe Nachman become more important than the graves of the Rambam and Ha-Gaon Rav Yosef Karo?"

Ha-Rav Dov Lior explained how absurd is the thought-process who those who travel to Uman: "People travel to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in order to ask him to help them to travel to the grave of Rebbe Nachman so they can make a request of him."]

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Shlach

For the week ending 9 June 2018 / 26 Sivan 5778

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Seeing is Believing

"And you will see it, and you will remember all the commandments of G-d" (15:39)

There's an interesting grammatical anomaly in this week's Torah portion. When describing the mitzvah of the tzitzit, the fringes that must be attached to a four-cornered garment, the Torah says: "It will be for you tzitzit, and you will see it, and you will remember all the commandments of G-d, and perform them."

Ostensibly, the Torah should have written, "You will see them," referring to the tzitzit strings in the plural. The spiritual masters (Menachot 43b) explain that the phrase "and you will see it" can also be read as "and you will see Him". This would mean that when someone does this mitzvah with all the appropriate intention and concentration, it has the power to open his eyes to the Divine Presence, the Shechina — "and you will see Him".

This idea is expressed in the physical shape of the mitzvah itself. The tzitzit threads are attached to the edges of a four-cornered garment. The four corners represent the four points of the compass which represent the limits of this world. Attached to the edge of this world is something that can take you beyond the world — the tzitzit.

Maybe that's why the mitzvah of tzitzit is considered equal to all the other mitzvot. The mitzvot are given to us to take us beyond this world. The tzitzit are a graphic representation of that which stretches out beyond the four corners of this world.

For that same reason, if you add the gematria (numerical value) of the word tzitzit (600) to the eight strings and the five knots that comprise the tzitzit, the total is 613, which equals the total number of the mitzvot.

Finally, the word tzitzit is connected to "lehazitz," which means "to peek."

Tzitzit allow you a "peek" beyond — beyond the fringe.

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Source Sheet - Murex Trunculus The Rediscovery of Techeiles or Just Another Fashion Fad - Summarized by Chaim Ozer Shulman - Article at <https://tinyurl.com/techeiles-2003>

Source sheet below:

I. History & Background

- A. Lost after הגמרא חתימת הגמרא
גמרא מנחות מג. - מר ממשכי אייתי תכלתא בשני רב אחאי בדקוה כו' מדרש תנחומא פרי שלח - ועכשיו אין לנו תכלת תכלת נגזו.
- B. 1857 Murex discovery
- C. 1888 Radziner Rebbe identifies cuttlefish (Sepia officinalis) as techeiles
D. 1913 Rav Herzog Disproves Radzyner Techeiles
E. 1913 Rav Herzog Identifies Murex trunculus as a likely candidate as chilazon, but it's purple
מנחות דף מג : - תניא, היה ר' מאיר אומר : מה נשתנה תכלת מכל מיני צבעונין? מפני שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע לכסא הכבוד.
- F. Rav Herzog suggests that Janthina snail may be chilazon, but secretion turns brown
- G. 1980 - Professor Elsner discovers that exposure to sunlight causes Murex trunculus dye to produce blue dye
- H. 1993 - Amutat Ptil Tekhelet founded to produce tekhelet strings

II. Proofs for Murex Trunculus Being Chilazon

- A. Archeological evidence shows tremendous amounts of Murex shells in coast of Northern Israel and Lebanon, in area identified in Maseches Shabbos as place chilazon trappers are
שבת דף כו. - "ומדלת הארץ השאיר נבזראדן רב טבחים לכרמים וליוגבים" (ירמיה' 52:16). כורמים - תני ר' יוסף אלו מלקטי אפרסמון מעין גדי ועד רמתא. יוגבים - אלו צייד חלזון מסולמות של צור ועד חיפה
- B. Chilazon is identified as having a shell in Shir Hashirim Raba and in Maseches Shabbos
שיר השירים רבה (11:4) - שמלתך לא בלתה מעליך כו' ולא היו גדלים? אמר ליה צא ולמד מן החלזון שכל זמן שהוא גדל נרתיקו גדל עמו שבת דף עה. - הצד חלזון והפוצעו כו' ר' יהודה אומר חייב שתיים.
- C. Zevulun is promised Sefunei Timunei Chol - Murex Snail Burrows in Sand
גמרא מגילה ו. - אמר זבולון כו' לאחיי נתת להם שדות וכרמים ולי נתת הרים וגבעות לאחיי נתת להם ארצות ולי נתת ימים ונהרות. אמר לו כולן צריכין לך על ידי חלזון שנאמר (דברים ל"ג) [עמים הר יקראו כו' כי שפע ימים יינקו] ושפוני טמוני חול.
- D. Etymology - In Farsi Chilazon is a Snail; Raavia quotes Yerushalmi that Chilazon is Propherin which is Greek word for Murex
ראבי"ה ברכות דף ט. סי' כ"ה - וגרסינן בירושלמי בין תכלת לכרתי בין פרופירין לבין פריפירין

Identifies techeiles with the Greek word for Murex (not Janthina or cuttlefish).

- E. Gemara Shabbos says the chilazon must be alive to produce good dye - consistent with mucus of Murex that deteriorates soon after death
גמ' שבת דף עה. ולחייב נמי משום נטילת נשמה? כו' מתעסק הוא אצל נטילת נשמה. והא מודה ר' שמעון בפסיק רישא ולא ימות? שאני הכא דכמה דאית ביה נשמה טפי ניחא ליה כי היכי דליציל ציבעיה. (רש"י שם החי טוב מדם המת).
- F. If Not Murex, Should Have Excluded It Like Kala Ilan

III. Problems With Murex Theory & Solutions

- A. Chilazon Braisa
מנחות דף מד. ת"ר : חלזון זהו - גופו דומה לים, וברייתו דומה לדג, ועולה אחד לשבעים שנה, ובדמו צובעין תכלת, לפיכך דמיו יקרים.

- B. Problem 1 with Braisa - גופו דומה לים
Solution - Sea fouling gives it appearance like the seabed
- C. Problem 2 with Braisa - ברייתו דומה לדג
Solution - Its creation is like fish in that it spawns eggs like fish
- D. Biggest problem with Braisa - עולה אחד לשבעים שנה
Possible solution - Comes up on the beach very infrequently
- E. Problem with chemical tests in gemara if Murex dye is chemically identical to Kala Ilan (indigo)
Perhaps test detects impurities in plant-derived indigo - Not satisfactory answer
מנחות דף מב.-מג. - ת"ר תכלת אין לה בדיקה ואין נקחית אלא מן המומחה כו' ותכלת אין לה בדיקה? והא רב יצחק בריה דרב יהודה בדיק ליה מייתי מגביא גילא ומיא דשבילתא ומימי רגלים בן ארבעים יום ותרי לה בגווייהו מאורתא ועד לצפרא איפרד חזותיה פסולה לא איפרד חזותיה כשרה. ור' אדא קמיה דרבא משמיה דרב עזירא אמר מייתי חמירא ארכסא דשערי ואפיה לה בגווייה אישתנאי למעליותא כשרה לגריעותא פסולה כו'. מאי אין לה בדיקה נמי דקאמר אטעימה. כו' היכא בדקנא בדרב יצחק בריה דרב יהודה לא איפרד חזותא כשרה איפרד חזותיה בדקינן לה בדרב אדא בחמירא ארכסא אשתני למעליותא כשרה לגריעותא פסולה.
- F. How same chemical could be valid if snail-derived and invalid if plant-derived

IV. Is Mesorah Needed to Determine Techeiles? Should You Wear Murex Dyed Tsitsis if Just a ספק?

- A. Do you need a Mesorah? Differing Views of Beis Halevi's Objection - 1. Negative mesorah; 2. The Rav says need positive mesorah.
- B. What if just a ספק if Murex is techeiles? Should you wear the Murex tsitsis?
1. ספק argument would likely apply for just a מסורה
2. Need color of beged - ממין הכנף according to one view of rishonim
שולחן ערוך סי' ט' סעי' ה' - ויש אומרים שצריך לעשות הצצית מצבע הטלית והמדקדקין נוהגין כן.
רמב"ם פ"ב מהל' צצית ה"ח - טלית שהוא כולו אדומה או ירוקה או משאר צבעונין עושה חוטי לבן שלה כעין צבעה אם ירוקה ירוקין אם אדומה אדומין.
רמ"א סי' ט' סעי' ה' - והאשכנזים אין נוהגין לעשות הצציות אלא לבנים אף בבגדים צבועים ואין לשנות (תרומת הדשן סי' מ"ו)
מנחות דף מא. - טלית אין פוטר בה אלא מינה ועיי"ש ברש"י ותוס' (מנחות דף מ. - ולא יהא אלא לבן).
- C. Concern of Rav Avner of כיוהרא - See ל"ד סעי' ג' וש"ע סי' ל"ד סעי' ט' ומשנה ברורה and שו"ע סי' י"א סעי' ט' and See article at <https://tinyurl.com/techeiles-2003>

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Caleb at the Crossroads

Imagine standing at a crossroads. We have all been there. We have all experienced moments in our life's journey when we had to make a crucial choice and decide whether to proceed along one road or along another. (Except for Yogi Berra, of course, who famously said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it.")

We have all also experienced moments much further along in our journey, often many years later, when we reflected back upon our decision and wondered what would have been if we had pursued the alternative road. Now imagine standing at a crossroads together with a close friend. Both of you face an identical choice, either this road or that. One of you chooses one road, and the other decides differently and selects the other road. Each would have an intriguing tale to tell if, after many years, they had to meet and have the opportunity to compare the results of their different decisions.

Throughout my adult life, I have been fascinated by the experiences of survivors of the Holocaust. Whenever I have been fortunate enough to have the time to engage in conversation with one of them, I listened eagerly to their stories. When they permit, and they do not always, I ask them questions not just about their experiences, but about their choices and decisions.

I especially remember the discussions I had with one of them, let us call him Mr. Silver. He often would tell me about the hellish years he spent fleeing and fighting the Nazis in the forests of Poland. He had a companion then, let us call him Simon. Mr. Silver and Simon were boyhood friends who together witnessed the murder of their parents, and who together managed to escape and join the partisans. Eventually, they were both caught and incarcerated in prisons and concentration camps.

In his story, Mr. Silver compared his attitude throughout those horrific times with the attitude of his friend Simon. "You know me," he would say, "and you know how I've always seen the bright side of things, the hopefulness of every situation, however dire." Indeed, I assured him that I could vouch for his consistent optimism.

"As much as I was an idealist," he would continue, "so was Simon a hard-core realist. He saw things as they were and dealt with them accordingly. He had no illusions whatsoever of hope."

Many years after my conversation with Mr. Silver, I finally met Simon and, together with him, was able to compare the life he led subsequent to the Holocaust, and subsequent to his crossroad decisions, with the life of Mr. Silver. Simon, after the war, chose not to marry and chose to live in a rather remote American community with little contact with other Jews. Mr. Silver married, raised a large family with numerous grandchildren, and was very much involved with Jewish causes, and eventually chose to live out his final years in the state of Israel.

Two individuals at the same crossroads, making different decisions, with starkly different life outcomes.

This week's Torah portion, Shelach, gives us the opportunity to witness individuals at the crossroads. Individuals who make radically different decisions and whose lives thereby played out very differently.

Let us focus, for example, on the personalities of Nachbi ben Vofsi, prince of the tribe of Naphtali, and of Caleb ben Yefuneh, prince of the tribe of Judah.

Up until the dramatic moment described in this week's Parsha they led almost identical lives. They both experienced the Exodus from Egypt, the miraculous splitting of the Red Sea, the revelation at Mount Sinai, and opportunities for leadership of their respective tribes.

They were both assigned to spy out the land of Canaan, and they both crisscrossed the Promised Land and returned to give their reports. But then

we read (Numbers 13:30-31), "Caleb... said, 'Let us by all means go up, as we shall gain possession of the land, and we shall surely overcome.' But the men who had gone up with him (one of whom was Nachbi) said, 'We cannot attack that people, for they are stronger than we.'"

Two individuals, at this very same crossroads in their lives; one full of hope and trust and confidence, and the other frightened, albeit very realistic. How differently their lives played out from this point forward. Nachbi perished in ignominy in the desert while Caleb remained a prince, enhanced his reputation, and was granted his reward, the city of Hebron.

We all face crossroads in our lives; some of great significance, and some seemingly trivial. Our choices can be Nachbi-like – practical and safe, but ultimately cowardly. Or they can be informed by hope, trust, and confidence, and ultimately be brave and heroic.

The choice is ours, and so are the consequences for the rest of our lives.

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Rabbi Daniel Stein
Are Vaping and E-Cigarettes Kosher?

Participating in Dangerous Activities

The Gemara (Brochos 32b and Shavuos 36b) derives from the pesukim "But beware and watch yourself very well" (Devarim 4:9) and "And you shall watch yourselves very well" (Devarim 4:15) that it is prohibited to deliberately enter into a dangerous situation or participate in a hazardous activity. Similarly, the Gemara (Shabbos 32a) states, "a person should never stand in a place of danger saying that Hashem will perform a miracle for him, lest in the end Hashem will not perform a miracle for him." This prohibition is later codified by the Rambam (Hichos Rotzeach 11:4-5) and the Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 427). The Beis Yosef (Yoreh Deah 116) cited by the Beer Hagolah (Choshen Mishpat ad. loc.) claims that it is likely that this prohibition is in fact of Biblical origin and severity even though it does not carry the penalty of lashes (see Minchas Asher, Devarim Sec. 7.) Moreover, since a life of Torah and mitzvos can be physically demanding at times, the Rambam (Hilchos Deios 4:1) emphatically prescribes that all unhealthy activities be avoided whenever possible.

Hashem Protects the Simple

At the same time, the Gemara in numerous places (Shabbos 129b, Yevamos 12b, 72a, Avodah Zarah 30b, and Niddah 31b) permits the performance of regular activities that entail a certain measure of risk based upon the reasoning, "but nowadays, when the multitudes have trodden upon this matter, the pasuk 'Hashem protects the simple' (Tehillim 116:6) is applied." Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky (Achiezer 1:23) argues that this rule only permits situations involving minimal amounts of risk which are therefore negligible in the minds of most participants. Alternatively, Rav Elchonon Wasserman (Koveitz Shiurim, Kesubos 136) notes that the Gemara only applies this principle to routine activities that are essential parts of daily life. Indeed, perhaps the permitted level of risk that can be tolerated should vary somewhat depending upon the necessity and measure of potential benefit to be derived from the activity [see Noda Beyehudah, vol. 2, Yoreh Deah 10]. However, recreational activities that entail more substantial, and therefore noticeable and perceptible, levels of risk would undoubtedly be prohibited.

Smoking
When smoking tobacco was first introduced to European Jewry it was regarded by some as a digestive aid and a generally innocuous if not healthy habit (see Pnei Yehoshua to Shabbos 39b and Mor U'ketziah 511.) However, as the harmful effects of smoking were beginning to emerge, the Chafetz Chaim (Likkutei Amarim 13) strongly condemned smoking where it was thought to be deleterious to health. Nonetheless, until relatively recently it

was still assumed by many poskim that only a small minority of smokers actually became ill as a result, and therefore smoking, while not advisable and discouraged, was still permitted under the banner of "Hashem protects the simple", particularly for those who had already become addicted (see Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah volume 2 siman 49, Choshen Mishpat volume 2 siman 76, as well as Kovetz Teshuvos 1:19.) In more recent times, as the pervasive perils of smoking have come to be understood and appreciated, it has been resoundingly prohibited by virtually all recognized poskim including those who had initially taken a more permissive stance (see Le'torah Ve'horaah 5772 pg. 67, Viyshma Moshe pg. 436, and Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:159 and 316, 3:354, 4:115.)

Vaping and Juuling

Over the past few years the use of e-cigarettes has become a rapidly emerging trend. The e-cigarette is a handheld electronic device that simulates the experience of smoking by heating a liquid, containing propylene glycol, glycerin, flavoring, and nicotine, called e-juice or e-liquid, to generate an aerosol, called a vapor, that the user inhales. Initially e-cigarettes were targeted and used primarily by those who were trying to quit smoking, and therefore it was understandably celebrated and received favorably in some circles. However, precisely because of its acceptability, availability, sophisticated appeal, and variety of flavors (numbering in the thousands), the practice of "vaping" quickly migrated to the adolescent population, including a large percentage of whom were never smokers or likely smokers. The most popular form of vaping, now called "Juuling" involves an e-cigarette called a Juul, which appears like a flash drive that can be conveniently charged on any computer and easily camouflaged. It utilizes e-juice cartridges called "pods" that are available in many popular flavors and contain a unique formula that can deliver nicotine in higher concentrations.

In August of 2016 the FDA banned the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. However, the popularity of e-cigarettes and Juuling amongst teenagers and young adults has continued to skyrocket at an alarming rate, and the design of the e-cigarette and the contents and concentrations of the e-liquid are not regulated, contributing further concern and volatility to the situation. In January of 2018 The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine published a comprehensive study which concluded that while the use of e-cigarettes appears less harmful than conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes emit numerous known toxins aside from nicotine. Studies have shown that e-cigarette emissions can include potentially toxic levels of formaldehyde, arsenic, benzene, chromium, manganese, nickel, lead, zinc, and diacetyl, etc. Even though some of the ingredients in e-juice have been designated as safe when consumed at room temperature, when they are heated by a metal coil they produce toxic substances that are potentially dangerous. These findings have been discussed in many recent news columns including Medical News Today, Newsweek, and The New York Times.

Other recent studies published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco UC San Francisco, American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, American Physiological Society, and Pediatrics have suggested that prolonged inhalation of these toxins can possibly lead to an increased risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory distress. In addition, the NASEM as well as Pediatrics have conclusively shown that the use of e-cigarettes among adolescents has been linked to the eventual use of conventional cigarettes. Even though the precise long-term effects of regular e-cigarette use remains largely undefined, since it involves the frequent inhalation of known toxins, Rav Hershel Schachter shlit"a and Rav Mordechai Willig shlit"a believe that there is already ample basis to assert that the use of e-cigarettes by non-smokers should provisionally be forbidden by virtue of the prohibition against self-endangerment found in the pasuk "And you shall watch yourselves very well," pending the collection of definitive data.

E-Juice, Glycerin, and Kashrus

E-cigarettes present additional halachic considerations including the issue of kashrus supervision. Often one of the core ingredients in the e-liquid is glycerin, a clear, odorless liquid with a thick consistency and sweet taste. It is also a common ingredient in many food and pharmaceutical products where it contributes moisture, thickness and sweetness. Glycerin can be derived from vegetable oils or animal fats and they are used interchangeably. Therefore, a food product containing glycerin typically requires kashrus supervision despite the insistence of the manufacturer that it uses strictly vegetable glycerin. Arguably, a glycerin product that is turned into an aerosol or vapor and then inhaled should also require kashrus certification. Indeed, this is the opinion of the Chicago Rabbinical Council and reported to be the position of Rav Shlomo Miller shlit"a as well.

The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 108:5) quotes the opinion of Rava (cited by the Gemara Avodah Zarah 66b) who permits the oral inhalation of forbidden wine vapor. However, Tosfos declares that this is because the vapor of the wine is caustic and offensive, but in essence Rava concedes that orally inhaling the concentrated vapor of forbidden food which is pleasant and commonly inhaled is akin to drinking it and would be prohibited (see also Shiltei Hagiborim Avodah Zarah 32a, Emunas Shmuel cited by Pischei Teshuvah 108:5, and Minchas Yaakov 36:38.) Moreover, the Ramo prohibits simply tasting forbidden foods even when they are not swallowed. Technically the vapor produced by e-cigarettes is an aerosol, which is the suspension of solid particles or liquid droplets in gas. Therefore, when inhaling the vapor produced by e-cigarettes, small amounts of the e-juice can be tasted and even swallowed, as evidenced by the marginal caloric intake involved in vaping.

It is conceivable that since e-juice in its raw liquid state has a foul taste, it has permanently forfeited its status as a forbidden food, based upon the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 67b) which posits that forbidden foods that have an unpleasant flavor are no longer considered "food" and thus are permitted. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach (Minchas Shlomo 1:17, 2:64) demonstrates from the Gemara (Bechoros 7a), which is hesitant to unequivocally declare donkey urine as sufficiently foul tasting so as to be permitted, that the threshold of disgust to allow forbidden foods is quite high. It is doubtful whether or not the raw flavor of e-juice, which is not intended to be drunk but occasionally leaks into the vapor, is adequately dreadful to surrender its status as a forbidden food.

Additionally, the Magen Avraham (467:10) prohibits cigarettes containing beer-soaked tobacco on Pesach, even though the tobacco is presently inedible (see Beis Meir.) Rav Moshe Schick (Maharam Schick, Orach Chaim 242) explains that since the beer-soaked tobacco is designed for inhalation and it has a pleasant flavor when inhaled, the tobacco can still be considered fit for consumption and remains prohibited. This is presumably predicated upon the notion that inhalation can sometimes be considered a form of imbibing (see also Magen Avraham 210:9). Similarly, since the e-juice is intended for inhalation and enjoyable when inhaled, it would retain its status as a forbidden food and as a result it should require kashrus supervision.

Conclusion

Vaping is an addictive recreational activity which entails the inhalation of known toxins and possibly forbidden foods, and therefore should be avoided entirely. The Ramo (Yoreh Deah 116:5) citing the Gemara (Chullin 10a) states in this context, "be careful of all things that cause danger, because danger is treated more severely than transgressions, and one should be more careful with an uncertain danger than with an uncertain issur." While the medical community is a long way from completing its study of e-cigarettes, that is a process that could take years if not decades and, unfortunately, we simply don't have the luxury of waiting. Vaping has already made considerable and disturbing inroads amongst the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community, which requires us to act decisively and preemptively by implementing appropriate precautions. May Hashem guide us in dealing with this new challenge and continue to protect us in all of our endeavors as the pasuk states, "Hashem will guard your going out and your coming in from now and to eternity" (Tehillim 121:8).

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The Times of Israel The Blogs :: Ben-Tzion Spitz

Shlach: A Father's Responsibilities

One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters. – George Herbert

The people of Israel had just been punished with a decree of forty years of wandering in the desert. After the people's lack of faith following the spies' evil report about the Promised Land, God had had enough. The people whom He had taken out of Egyptian slavery, the people whom He revealed Himself to at Mount Sinai, the people whom He had cared for miraculously through their sojourn through the harsh desert had rebelled, had complained and had tried God's patience one time too many. That generation would die in the desert. Only their sons, the next generation, would merit to enter the Promised Land.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the people of Israel were crushed and despondent due to God's punishment. Immediately after the narrative regarding the harsh forty-year decree, God transmits a seemingly unconnected set of laws. He starts talking about when they will come to the land and types of sacrifices they will bring.

Rabbeinu Bechaye on Numbers 15:2 (Shlach) explains that God is comforting the people of Israel after His harsh decree. He is promising them that the next generation will enter the Promised land, that the sons will inherit the land that their fathers were supposed to conquer.

Rabbeinu Bechaye goes on to explain that God was consoling the sons and looking after them as a father. He gives examples as to the different ways that God took care of the children of Israel as a father takes care of his son. Rabbeinu Bechaye takes the opportunity to discuss a father's responsibilities to his son and goes on to enumerate what those five responsibilities are:

1. To perform the Brit Mila (circumcision).
2. To teach him Torah.
3. To redeem him from the Kohen (only applicable to non-caesarian firstborn sons of non-Levite descent).
4. To teach him a trade.
5. To marry him off.

To perform the Brit Mila and to redeem his son from the Kohen are straightforward one-time events. To marry off a child is also generally a one-time event though it takes much more time and effort. To teach a trade is for (hopefully) a limited period, the purpose of which is to lead the son to financial independence. However, there is one obligation that can endure for the life of the father-son relationship: that of teaching the son Torah. The Torah is endless, and hence the obligation to teach one's child Torah is one that can last a lifetime.

It is not dependent on the age or the circumstances of the son. The son can be an adult with his own children and grandchildren, yet there would still exist that obligation, that divinely ordained responsibility to stay connected to our children through the teaching of Torah.

May we have divine assistance and success in fulfilling all of our parental responsibilities.

Shabbat Shalom

Dedication To the memories of Milly Buller, as well as Prof. Baruch Brody. Each was a parent of exceptional children. May their families be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

To the engagement of our son, Akiva, to Orelle Feuer of Netanya. Mazal Tov!

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

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Shelach

פרשת שלח תשע"ה

שלח לך אנשים

Send forth men, if you please. (13:2)

Rashi notes the words *Sh'lach lecha*, "Send for yourself," suggesting that the *lecha*, for yourself, is superfluous. The *pasuk* should have said, *Shlach anashim*; "Send men." What is added by *lecha*? *Rashi* explains that Hashem was intimating that He had not commanded Moshe Rabbeinu to send spies: *Ani eini metzavecha*; "I am not commanding you to do this. It is up to you – if you want to do it – then you may send." Sometimes a person predetermines his decisions. He is not going to change, to give in, to concede that he might be in error. Nothing will compel him to see the light, the error of his ways, other than the error itself. Let him go, and when he fails, he will realize that he has made a mistake. For some, this is the only avenue. This type of person must fail before he succeeds, since he refuses to face the reality of his own fallibility. The nation demanded spies. The people were beyond convincing. They would not accept the fact that what they demanded impugned Hashem as the One Who had taken them out of Egypt, protected and sustained them up until this very moment. Their demand was ludicrous. They were not an army with the ability, skill and weaponry to undertake such a major battle. They were an aggregate of slaves recently released from two centuries of brutal servitude. Such a group only responds to a *shlach lecha* – "go" and see for yourself. For them, this was the only way.

The *Lelover Rebbe, Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita*, renders this *pasuk* homiletically. *Rashi's* words: *Ani eini metzavecha*, "I am not commanding you," can be understood as: *Ani, "I."* Those individuals who are always prefixing their statements with "I," "me," or "myself" are individuals who view everything as if it is all about them: they do; they achieve; they perform. Such people refuse to recognize that everything which they do is actually achieved via the grace of Hashem. We do nothing; Hashem does it all. Those whose world revolves around the *ani, "I," Eini metzavecha*, "I do not want you to send them as *meraglim*." They will not succeed. Hashem seeks men of humility, individuals who recognize that everything is derived from Him.

The *Rebbe* quotes *Rabbeinu Yonah* (commentary to *Mishlei* 3:6) who teaches, "Know! There are people who remember Hashem when they are about to undertake a major endeavor, such as setting sail over the sea, a trip by caravan, or a large business deal. Unfortunately, when it involves matters of a lesser nature, they seem to forget about Hashem, because they consider the endeavor simple enough for them to execute (on their own), or they think that, since it is not of considerable import, even if they fail, it will be an insignificant loss. (Therefore, they attempt to do these deeds on their own and do not place their trust in Hashem.)"

"In order to correct this (misguided outlook), the *pasuk* teaches, *B'chol derachecha deieihu*, 'For all your ways, know Him (remember Hashem)'. Whether it is for large matters or small matters; for everything is in Hashem's Hands, and all of our achievements are totally dependent upon His kindness. (Without Hashem, we have no chance whatsoever of achieving success in anything). Therefore, remember Hashem for all your deeds, and He will guide and assist you. Your *bitachon*, trust, in Hashem, will be immensely rewarded, because it is so special in Heaven."

Bitachon in Hashem pays off in success in one's life. We must accustom ourselves to acknowledge Hashem for everything that happens in our lives. Without Him, it would just not happen. We have become so used to believing in ourselves that we have lost sight of the real source of our success. How easy it is to forget; how sad it is when we are "reminded." *B'ezras Hashem, Baruch Hashem, B'sayata diShmaya*, should be our constant catchphrases, because Hashem is our constant protector and facilitator.

כל נשיא בהם

Everyone a leader among them. (13:2)

The word *Nasi*, prince, leader, is comprised of four letters which, when separated, make up two words which are opposites of one another. *Nasi* – *nun, sin, yud, aleph*: within these four letters are the words *yeish*, which means "there is," and *ayin*, "there is naught." *Otzar HaChaim* sees

this as an allusion to the quality of a *Nasi's* character. The *Nasi* who considers himself to be a *yeish* (there is; he is something), in actuality, has nothing; he is an *ayin*. The *Nasi* who views himself through the eyes of humility, who sees himself as an *ayin*, is thus a *yeish*. Such a *Nasi* has something to offer: his sterling character and humility.

What happened to the *Nesim* that were sent as *meraglim*, spies, to reconnoiter *Eretz Yisrael*? These were once distinguished leaders, men of virtue and character. How did they fall from such an elevated spiritual perch to end their lives in complete ignominy? The *Steipler Gaon, zl*, explains that they fell prey to *gaavah*, misplaced arrogance, because they had been elevated to the position of *meraglim*. Rather than view themselves in their true context as *shluchim*, agents of the nation, sent to bring back a report, they suddenly decided that Hashem required their input. The nation could go no further until the *meraglim* returned with their report. They would determine the feasibility of successfully conquering *Eretz Yisrael*. It was all up to them.

How ludicrous! How audacious! How delusional could one be to believe that G-d Who brought Egypt to its knees required the assistance and advice of twelve puny men!

It all boils down to arrogance. A little bit of *kavod*, prestige, distinction, eminence, can destroy one's ability to see clearly. The most astute and clear-thinking individual can become so self-absorbed, that what otherwise would be viewed as ludicrous suddenly becomes cogent. There is no question that a rational person would never have imagined that Hashem required his assistance to determine the Jewish army's ability to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*. One who overnight rose from citizen to leader, from member of the tribe to its prince/leader, was sadly capable of falling into the abyss of arrogance. Once a tragedy like this occurs, the disease that results is often incurable without extreme therapy and, in the aftermath, can cause a person to lose sight of Who is the Creator and true *manhig*, guide, of the world.

A caveat which I think is appropriate. The Torah writes that a judge may not accept a bribe, *Ki ha'shochad ye'aver pikchim v'saleif divrei tzaddikim*, "For a bribe will blind those who see and corrupts words that are just" (*Shemos* 23:7). If the Torah writes it, one may accept it as an absolute verity. Bribery blinds; bribery perverts. Is there any greater form of bribery than a little *kavod* which leads to *gaavah*? One who becomes haughty is self-bribed. He becomes blind to himself because he begins to see through self-colored lenses. He now sees what he wants to see. Such myopic vision is a form of self-imposed blindness.

וישכמו בבקר ויעלו אל ראש ההר לאמר הננו ועלינו אל המקום אשר אמר ד' כי חטאנו
They awoke early in the morning and ascended toward the mountain top saying, "We are ready, and we shall ascend to the place of which Hashem has spoken." (14:40)

The other night, the entire nation had been trembling with fright, weeping incessantly (and unnecessarily) with bitter tears, demonstrating abject fear that they would be forced to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael* and conquer its inhabitants. Suddenly, their attitude changed. Not only were they now prepared to go into battle – they went. We all know the outcome of that ill-fated trip, but what prompted them to go? What happened to the trembling, the fear? How did it dissipate overnight?

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, addresses this question, but first, he describes the scenario (based on *Chazal*) which so captivated *Klal Yisrael*, turning them against Hashem and His chosen leaders. The *meraglim*, spies, returned. Each spy entered his personal family tent, did not say a word, but rather than lay down on a bed, lowered himself to the ground and began to tear out his hair. Next, he rent his garments. Seeing this frightening scene, his family asked, "What happened to you? Why are you doing this?" He did not respond, because he was too "preoccupied" with grief.

Now that the individual had his family's undivided attention, he began to recount the details of the trip to the Holy Land – the land that was "supposedly" so good that the land would one day (if they survived the war) become their home. He told his family about the massive giants, men of such

size and girth that they were human bulldozers. Nothing could stand in their way. How could anyone attempt to battle such giants?

The spies' plan was beginning to pay off, as the members of each individual family slowly began to weep. They, too, were now gripped with pain and fear. This was supposed to have been an easy trip, a walk in the park. The way the spies described the upcoming battle for *Eretz Yisrael*, it appeared that the Jewish People were about to become fodder.

Word was spreading. When crying and screaming emanate from a single tent in a "gated" community, others hear and want to know the source of the grief. Soon everyone is weeping as fear grips the members of each individual *shevet*, tribe. This was the plan. The *meraglim* knew that returning to the nation and attempting to convince them all at once was futile. Just as one builds a fire for a barbeque, moving a few coals wrapped in paper to the side, until the fire becomes strong in one place and is now ready for more coals to be added. They did not have a chance for success by addressing the entire nation at one time. They would have to communicate in a piecemeal, tent-to tent, tribe-to-tribe manner until the conflagration of fear gripped the entire nation.

Hashem saw all of this, and He said, "If you are so afraid of entering the Holy Land – no problem. You will just remain in the wilderness for another forty years. You will perish here, and the wilderness will become your burial grounds. Your corpses will wither in the hot sand. That is your alternative to entering *Eretz Yisrael*."

Immediately upon hearing this, the very next day, a group of hardy individuals packed up their gear and left for *Eretz Yisrael*. "We will do it!" they called out. "We will overcome and vanquish the pagans. We realize that we were wrong. We have sinned, and now we are going to make it right." Well – they did not make it. What had transpired overnight? The previous night, they had been trembling with fear, and today they were prepared to battle, regardless of the odds. What changed? As soon as Hashem said, "Stay," they were ready to "move". Why?

Rav Reuven relates that he presented this question to *Horav Reuven Fine, zl* (*Rosh Yeshivah* of Torah Vodaath), on the night before he (the *Rosh Yeshivah*) passed away. Apparently, the *Maggid* (*Rav Reuven Karlinstein*) was the last person to speak with the *Rosh Yeshivah*, since, once he issued his reply to the question, he spoke no more.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* replied, "You are questioning the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. When it is necessary – there is fear. When it is not necessary – there is no fear." What did the *Rosh Yeshivah* impart with this enigmatic lesson? What was his answer to the question?

The *Maggid* explains: The *yetzer hora* is likened to the *se'or she'b'issah*, yeast within the dough. Dough is comprised of flour and water. As long as it is left in its pure (flour and water/unadulterated) state, it is fine. Once yeast is added to the equation (mixture), the dough begins to rise almost out of control. When the *yetzer hora* hears the word "*mitzvah*" (Hashem has commanded us to go to *Eretz Yisrael*), it immediately shifts into "gear", into *yetzer hora* mode, to prevent the *mitzvah* from achieving fruition: "No way can we make it"; "We will not have a chance for success"; "We will all be viciously killed". The *se'or she'b'issah* was taking hold, beginning to do its work, planting fear in the hearts and minds of every Jew. Anything to prevent the performance of a *mitzvah*.

Once the "*mitzvah*" was removed, once Hashem had declared that they no longer were going to *Eretz Yisrael*, the *yetzer hora* had no reason to imbue the nation with fear. There were no "challenges" (such as Hashem's command) to overcome. The evil inclination kick starts his evil only when there is something to "achieve," something holy to obviate. This is why one who is a *metzueh v'oseh* – commanded to perform a *mitzvah* – and carries it out, is on a higher spiritual plane (and garners greater reward) than one who acts out of the goodness of his heart. The *metzueh* has to overcome the challenge of the *yetzer hora*, which is difficult, since the "evil" mode kicks in whenever one attempts to do good. Apparently, the *yetzer hora* sees no enduring challenge from the individual who goes beyond the strictures of command. It is when one executes the *mitzvah* in accordance with Hashem's

will that the *yetzer hora* feels threatened enough to act. In order for the good of the one who performs the *mitzvah* to triumph over the evil of the *yetzer hora*, the good must be sincere. Evil founded on the shoulders of falsehood cannot succeed against good that stands on the shoulders of sincerity.

ויהיו בני ישראל במדבר וימצאו איש מקשש עצים ביום השבת

The Bnei Yisrael were in the wilderness and they found a man gathering wood on the Shabbos day. (15:32)

The *Maharal m'Prague (Gur Aryeh)*, notes that the *mekoshesh eitzim*, one who gathered wood on *Shabbos*, carried out his act of contempt during the second *Shabbos* of the Jews in the wilderness. Apparently, they observed the first *Shabbos*. *Chazal* teach (*Shabbos* 118b) that had they observed two *Shabbosos*, they would not have experienced the bitter exile. *Shabbos* is the great panacea which would have protected them. Why did the *mekoshesh* desecrate the second *Shabbos*? He acted for the sake of Heaven (or so he believed), in order that people would realize that *Shabbos* observance was serious business. When they would see the punishment meted out against someone who desecrates the *Shabbos*, they would think twice before acting against the Torah.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, applies his captivating imagery to describe the ascent of the *mekoshesh eitzim* to Heaven with the delusionary thought in his mind that he (of all people) was deserving of a front seat in *Gan Eden*. After all, by desecrating *Shabbos*, he taught the entire nation a valuable lesson. As he was waiting for his special pass, the Angels in charge asked for a few moments, while they showed him some meaningful scenes from Jewish history – scenes that were, in effect, the result of his “selfless” act of desecrating *Shabbos* to teach the people a lesson.

They first showed him the *Churban Bais Hamikdash*, destruction of the First Temple, followed by the destruction of the Second Temple and the Jewish nation’s exile from the Holy Land. This was followed by the rivers of Jewish blood, results of the systematic murders, pogroms, inquisitions and holocaust that wreaked havoc on our people. Seeing this, the *mekoshesh* began to wonder, “Why are you showing this to me? I am here to collect my due for the wonderful act of teaching the Jews the significance of *Shabbos*.”

They looked at him and calmly responded, “We simply would like you to see some of the results of your wonderful selfless act of profaning the second *Shabbos* of the year. Had you not desecrated that *Shabbos*, there would have been no destruction of the Temples, no exile, no pogroms, no inquisition, no holocaust – just peace and serenity. If you thought that your idea was so compelling, why did you not speak it over with Moshe *Rabbeinu*? As the preeminent Torah sage, he would have guided your actions. You thought that you were smart. You now realize that such a statement could not be further from the truth!”

We must never forget that our minds and thought process are, for the most part, subjective. The mere feeling that we are acting *l’shem Shomayim* neither sets nor determines the criteria for *l’shem Shomayim*. For that decision we have *gedolei Yisrael*, Torah giants, who are steeped in Torah and its wisdom. They are the individuals who, based upon their *daas Torah*, should render such a decision.

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In loving memory of our grandparents Phillip and Lillian Finger who were long-time friends and family of the Hebrew Academy.

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Holey Foods

Of Donuts and Bagels

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Challah on donuts

“Is there a requirement to separate challah from donuts?”

Question #2: Frum cousin

“I have discovered that a cousin of mine eats donuts only as part of a meal. Is there a halachic basis for his practice?”

Question #3: Holy bagels

“May I use bagels for lechem mishneh on Shabbos?”

Question #4: Top of the grill

“If I bake small loaves of bread on top of the grill, do they qualify as hamotzi and may I use them for the seudos of Shabbos?”

Question #5: Waffling along

“A friend of mine just purchased a factory that manufactures waffles. Does he need to have challah taken? The factory is located in a rural area, where there is no Jewish population.”

Introduction:

To understand the issues raised by our opening questions, we must analyze the definition of “bread,” particularly for the three different mitzvos mentioned: the separating of challah, the brochah of hamotzi, and the fulfillment of lechem mishneh, having two loaves at the Shabbos repasts. (Please note: This entire article will use the word challah to refer to the Torah’s mitzvah of setting aside a sample of dough to be given to a kohen, or to be burnt if the dough is tamei. I am not referring to the unique bread that is customarily served at Shabbos and Yom Tov meals, which has come to be called challah, although this is, technically, a misnomer.)

Separating challah

We will begin our discussion with the laws of challah taking, since this will make it easier to present the halachic literature on the other topics.

The Torah describes the mitzvah of challah in the following passage:

When you enter the land to which I am bringing you, it will be that, when you eat from the bread of the land, you shall separate a terumah offering for G-d. The first dough of your kneading troughs shall be separated as challah, like the terumah of your grain shall you separate it (Bamidbar 15:18-20).

The Torah requires challah to be taken from your kneading troughs, from which we derive that there is no requirement to separate challah unless there is as much dough as the amount of manna eaten daily by each member of the Jewish people in the desert. *Chazal* explain that this amount, called *ke’shiur isas midbar*, was equal to the volume of 43.2 eggs. In contemporary measure, we usually assume that this is approximately three to five pounds of flour. (For our purposes, it will suffice to use these round figures. I encourage each reader to ask his own rav or posek for exact quantities.)

The requirement to separate challah depends on the ownership of the dough at the time it is mixed, not on who mixes it. In other words, if a Jew owns a bakery, there is a requirement to separate challah, even if his workers are not Jewish. Similarly, if a gentile does the kneading in a Jewish-owned household, nursing home or school, one must separate challah. And, conversely, there is no requirement to separate challah at a bakery owned by non-Jews, even if the employees are Jewish.

When there is a definite requirement to separate challah, one recites a brochah prior to fulfilling the mitzvah. As with all blessings on mitzvos, the brochah begins *Baruch atoh Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu*. There are different opinions and customs as to the exact text used in concluding this brochah. Among the versions I have seen: Some conclude *lehafrish terumah*, others *lehafrish challah*, and still others *lehafrish challah min ha’isa*.

Getting battered

Is there a requirement to separate challah when one is mixing a batter, as opposed to dough? The answer to this question is that it depends on how the batter is baked. When the finished product is baked in an oven, there is a requirement to separate challah, whether or not it was originally dough or a batter (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 329:2). Similarly, dough or a batter baked in a frying pan or a “wonder pot” (a pot meant for baking cakes on top of the stove) is also *chayov* in challah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 329:2). (Again -- bear in mind that there is a requirement to separate challah only when there are at least three pounds of flour in the batter, a circumstance that is unusual when baking on a household stovetop.)

Waffles, when baked from batter poured into molds, are *chayov* in challah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 329:5). However, pancakes, which are made by pouring dough directly onto a stovetop or a frying pan, are exempt from challah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 329:5), even if one makes a large quantity. Why are waffles included in the requirement to take challah, but not pancakes? After all, both are made from loose batters.

The rishonim explain that when processing a thin batter without an oven, the finished product requires challah only when it has a bread-like appearance, what the Gemara calls *turisa denahama*, which it receives when baked in a mold (Tosafos, Brochos 37b s.v. Lechem). When a batter is neither baked in an oven nor poured into a mold prior to being baked, it does not form a *turisa denahama*. Therefore, pancakes, which are made from a batter, are not baked in an oven and are not poured into a mold, never form a *turisa denahama*, which is a requirement for them to become *chayov* in challah.

The waffle factory

At this point, we can address the fifth question that was asked above: “A friend of mine just purchased a factory that manufactures waffles. Does he need to have challah taken? The factory is located in a rural area where there is no Jewish population.”

The Shulchan Aruch rules that one is required to separate challah from waffles that are baked in a mold and therefore form a shape. Since a factory uses more than five pounds of flour in each batch of waffle mix, one should separate challah with a brochah, even though there are no Jews involved in the production. Ideally, arrangements should be made to have a frum person present during production to separate challah. Alternatively, there are methods whereby challah can be separated by appointing a frum person who is elsewhere as an agent for separating challah, but the logistics that this requires are beyond the scope of this article.

Sunny dough

All opinions agree that dough baked in the sun is not obligated in challah (Pesachim 37a). Also, a batter prepared in a frying pan that has some water in the bottom of the pan is patur from challah (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 329:2), since this is considered to be cooked batter rather than baked bread.

Holy donuts

At this point, we can begin to explain whether donuts require the separation of challah. Donuts are made of dough with a reasonably thick consistency that is then deep-fried, or cooked in oil (these are two ways of saying the same thing). Cooking is not usually considered a process that creates bread. The question is whether the requirement to take challah exists already because it is mixed into dough, or that there is no requirement to take challah unless one intends to bake the dough.

According to one approach in the rishonim, one is obligated to separate challah from any dough that meets the size (43.2 eggs) and ownership (Jewish) requirements mentioned above, regardless of whether one intends to bake, cook or fry the dough afterwards (Rabbeinu Tam, as understood by Tosafos, Brochos 37b s.v. Lechem and Pesachim 37b s.v. Dekulei alma). Since the Torah requires separating challah from dough, it is possible to contend that there is a requirement to separate challah from dough even when there is no intention to bake it into bread, but cook it as pasta, kreplach, or donuts. According to this approach, a Jewish-owned pasta factory is required to separate challah for the macaroni, spaghetti and noodles that it produces. (Note that some authorities who accept Rabbeinu Tam’s basic approach, that any dough is obligated in challah, nevertheless exempt dough manufactured for pasta because of other reasons that are beyond the scope of our topic [see Tosafos, Brochos 37b, s.v. Lechem, quoting Rabbeinu Yechiel].)

The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 329:3) concludes that dough that one intends to cook or fry is exempt from the requirement to take challah, ruling against Rabbeinu Tam. However, the Shach contends that one should separate challah without a brochah. Again, this would be required only if someone prepared a dough containing at least three pounds of flour. The Shach would hold this way also regarding other products that involve cooked or fried dough, such as kreplach. Thus, a caterer, restaurant or hotel cooking a large quantity of kreplach for a communal Purim seudah should have challah taken from the dough, in order to take into consideration the Shach’s position.

So, the simple answer to the question, “Is there a requirement to separate challah from donuts?” is that, according to the Shach, there is such a requirement, if more than three pounds of flour are being used. However, no brochah should be recited when separating challah, even when using a large amount of flour, since most authorities exempt dough that one intends to cook or fry from the requirement of taking challah.

Hamotzi

Having established some of the rules germane to the requirement to separate challah, do the same rules apply when determining what items require hamotzi before eating them? This is, itself, a subject that is disputed (see Tosafos, Pesachim and Brochos 37b s.v. Lechem). Some authorities contend that the rules for brochos are identical to those applied to the separation of challah, whereas others rule that one does not recite hamotzi unless another requirement is met – that the finished product has a bread-like appearance (turisa denahama). The halachic basis for drawing a distinction between the mitzvah of challah and the brochah to be recited is that the requirement to separate challah is established at the time the dough is mixed, whereas the halachic determination of which brochah to recite is created when the food is completed (Rabbeinu Yonah, Brochos; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 168:13).

Most authorities conclude that the correct brochah prior to eating a dough product that is cooked or fried is mezonos. According to this opinion, the correct brochah to recite before eating donuts or cooked kreplach is mezonos. (Sometimes kreplach are baked, which might change the halacha.) However, there is a second opinion that the correct brochah on these items is hamotzi, because they are all made from dough. According to this latter opinion, one is required to wash netilas yadayim prior to eating these items and to recite the full birchas hamazon (bensching) afterwards.

How do we rule?

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 168:13) and the Rema (ibid.) both follow the majority opinion that the correct brochah prior to eating a dough product that is cooked or fried is mezonos. However, the Shulchan Aruch also cites the minority opinion, that one should recite hamotzi prior to eating a cooked dough product. He concludes that, to avoid any question, someone who is a yarei shamayim should eat a cooked dough product only after making hamotzi and eating a different item that is definitely bread. This way, the G-d fearing person avoids all halachic issues.

Some authorities question this solution, since a snack food requires a brochah even when consumed in the middle of a meal. A snack that is made out of dough is included under the halachic heading called pas habaah bekisnin, a topic I have written about in other articles, including one entitled Pizza, Pretzels and Pastry that can be found on the website RabbiKaganoff.com. (Those eager to pursue this question are also referred to the Magen Avraham [168:35] and the Machatzis Hashekel [ad loc.])

We now have enough information to answer the second of our opening questions: “I have discovered that a cousin of mine eats donuts only as part of a meal. Is there a halachic basis for his practice?”

Indeed, there is. According to the Shulchan Aruch’s recommendation that a yarei shamayim eat cooked dough foods only after reciting hamotzi on a different food that is definitely bread, your cousin is following the approach advised by the Shulchan Aruch to cover all the bases. However, this practice is not halachically required.

Holy bagels

At this point, let us return to the third of our original questions: “May I use bagels for lechem mishneh on Shabbos?”

To answer this question, let us spend a moment researching how bagels are made. The old-fashioned method of making bagels was by shaping dough into the well-known bagel with-a-hole circle, boiling them very briefly and then baking the boiled dough. Modern bagel factories do not boil the dough, but instead steam the shaped bagels prior to baking them, which produces the same texture and taste one expects when eating a bagel, creates a more consistent product and lends itself more easily to a mass production process. In either way of producing bagels, the halacha is that their proper brochah is hamotzi, because they are basically baked products (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 168:14). Since halacha treats them as regular bread, they may be used for lechem mishneh on Shabbos and Yom Tov. So, although bagels and donuts often share a common shape, they do not, in this case, share a common halachic destiny.

Top of the grill

At this point, let us examine the fourth of our original questions: “If I bake small loaves of bread on top of the grill, do they qualify as hamotzi, and may I use them for the seudos of Shabbos?” Does bread baked on top of a grill qualify as bread for hamotzi and lechem mishneh?

We can prove what the halacha is in this case from a passage of Talmud. The Gemara (Pesachim 37a) quotes a dispute between Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakeish whether bread baked in a pan or pot is chayov in challah or not. According to Rabbi Yochanan, all such bread is chayov in challah, whereas according to Reish Lakeish, it is chayov in challah only if the pan is preheated, and then the dough is placed inside; however, if the dough is placed into a cold pan which is then heated, there is no chiyuv challah.

Although Rabbeinu Chananel rules according to Reish Lakeish in this instance, most rishonim rule according to Rabbi Yochanan, and this is the conclusion of the Shulchan Aruch. The halachic conclusion is, also, that this bread requires the brochah of hamotzi (Rema, Orach Chayim 168:14). Furthermore, most authorities understand that the dispute between Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakeish is when one is attempting to make bread out of a batter by baking it in a pan on top of the fire, but that all opinions agree that dough baked on top of the fire is definitely treated as bread. Therefore, we can answer this question positively: Bread produced this way may be used for the Shabbos meals, including lechem mishneh.

Conclusion

We have discovered that there are a variety of regulations that define whether something is chayov in challah, requires hamotzi and may be used for lechem mishneh. Dough or batter that is baked in an oven or other baking process and looks and services like bread, is bread for all these mitzvos.

On the other hand, a batter that is subsequently cooked or fried is not considered bread for any of these purposes.

In between, we have our donuts, which, although made from dough, are cooked. One should take challah from them without a brochah, assuming that there is sufficient quantity to create a chiyuv. For brochos purposes, we usually consider them mezonos, although there is a basis to be more stringent and to eat them, always, within a meal, to avoid getting involved in a halachic dispute.

Since we have spent most of our article discussing the mitzvah of challah, we should note the following Medrash that underscores its vast spiritual significance: “In the merit of the following three mitzvos, the world was created – in the merit of challah, in the merit of maasros, and in the merit of bikkurim” (Bereishis Rabbah 1:4).