

**Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet**  
**Vayeshev 5772**



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**  
**The TorahWeb Foundation**  
**Two Dreams?**

Many years ago Rav Aharon Soloveitchik zt"l spoke at a family simcha and commented as follows:

The brothers of Yosef were upset with him over his two dreams. Their father, Yaakov Avinu, only had one dream - obviously very spiritual in nature - which was all about

holy angels. Their brother all of a sudden came up with two dreams: one about the celestial bodies - the sun, the moon and the stars - and the other, very materialistic in nature, which was all about bundles of grain. Yosef's brothers disapprovingly wondered - where did this gashmius-dige dream come from? It was not in accordance with the family tradition.

But the truth of the matter was that Yaakov Avinu's dream really consisted of two parts: the ladder in Yaakov's dream was standing on the earth and its top reached into the heavens. Yosef broke his father's dream into its two component parts, but in truth both parts were already contained within Yaakov's dream.

[The Talmud tells us that the tanna R' Eliezer had a policy not to say anything he hadn't heard from his rebbeim (Sukkah 28a). In Pirkei D' Rabbi Eliezer it is stated that R' Eliezer was such an original thinker that he would develop Torah ideas that no one had heard since the days of maamad Har Sinai. Don't these two descriptions seem to contradict each other?

Rav Kook suggested that the two passages were not at all contradictory. The tanna R' Eliezer adopted a policy never to express any original ideas, but he paid close attention to the traditions he had received from his rebbeim and thus he heard more from his rebbeim than his contemporaries. He would always break down the Torah ideas he received from his rebbeim into their component parts, and thereby point out that many additional ideas were implicitly contained within what they had all heard from their rebbeim[1]]

Some individuals had expressed their dissatisfaction with Rav Yoshe Ber's (his brother) way of thinking. Many felt that their zeideh Rav Chaim only had one dream which was about halacha, and thus questioned where R' Yosef got this second dream of philosophy. This was not at all part of the family tradition.

Rav Aharon concluded that in his opinion, his brother Rav Yoshe Ber did not add on a new second dream, but merely did as Yosef hatzaddik of old and broke down the traditional dream into its two component parts - halacha and agada.

The Talmud consists of both halacha and agada. The halacha guides us as to how to act, while the agada guides us as to how to think. In every generation we have to present our age-old Torah traditions in a language that will be understood by the masses. Rav Aharon's - Rav Yoshe Ber - was simply translating the haskafot of Chazal into contemporary philosophical jargon. There was only one dream, broken down into its two component parts - "Old wine kept in brand new vessels."

[1] This discussion of R' Eliezer was not part of Rav Aharon's drasha  
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**Jerusalem Post :: Friday, December 16, 2011**  
**POLICY, TACTICS AND STRATEGY :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

Any successful enterprise, spiritual or mundane, requires a sense of clarity. What is the eventual goal that this organization or person wishes to achieve? So to speak, what is our ultimate purpose, individually and organizationally? Is self-perpetuation the real goal of many Jewish

organizations? Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto begins his immortal work, Mesilat Yesharim, by asking these very questions.

What is the purpose of our lives? What are we supposed to accomplish? Once we know what our goal is then we can proceed to discuss how to get there. That brings us to the area of strategy - how to get from here to there. Once general strategy is in place then we can proceed to adopt the tactics that will implement our strategy.

And in order to adjust our strategy and tactics to Torah and moral norms, a proper policy of behavior and action is necessary. These three components of achieving one's goals are three different areas of thought and behavior. And, the three should not be mixed or confused one for the other and each one need not have equal weight and authority.

Tactics are a test of practicality - what works and what does not. Strategy is really a matter of intellect mixed with intuition. And policy should be limited by rigid and unbending rules of Torah values and tradition. Elevating tactics to the inflexible standard of policy will doom any chance of success, for all elements of practicality are cast aside in favor of some unspoken and unproven higher authority. It then creates ideologues and eventually fanatics whose slogan is "Don't confuse me with the facts - my mind is already made up."

Both the Jewish secular and religious worlds continue to fight their intellectual and substantive battles with the same tactics that were employed - unsuccessfully and divisively - in the nineteenth century. Somehow these tactics - mutual demonization, bans, separation, extreme methods and ideas, willful ignorance of the person and position of the "other" - all have proven to be fruitless in the long run.

Reform and secularism have not disappeared from the Jewish picture in spite of the confident predictions of opponents that they would soon pass from the scene. The religious section of the Jewish people has, if anything, strengthened itself in the past decades in spite of all of the efforts of the government, media and budgetary and societal pressures to snuff out the "old Jew."

Ben Gurion in the 1940's stated that there was no reason anymore to openly battle the religious in the nascent state because "just wait one generation and they will all die out by themselves." That observation and prediction has also proven itself to be woefully inaccurate. Yet tactics apparently never change in these cultural struggles.

What didn't work for Orthodoxy in the 1800's is nevertheless slavishly imitated in 2011. The religious world correctly sanctified goals and perhaps even strategy. Its error lies in sanctifying tactics in the face of the empiric evidence that those tactics do not achieve success.

I am told that a certain great sage and rabbi employed those tactics in 1850, so how can we now deviate from his way? My retort is that I do not know what that sage would say and do if he were alive today in 2011 and knew what the story of the Jewish people over the past 160 years actually was. The Torah is eternal. Tactics once employed in its defense and promulgation is not.

Which brings me to the question of policy. In many areas of Jewish life, policy issues have somehow been elevated to the status of being halacha and even basic principles of Jewish faith. Viewpoints on certain issues have become hardened into accusations of heresy and theological error simply because there are those who disagree, and perhaps justifiably so, with those viewpoints.

The winning policy, in my opinion, is to fight less, ignore more and have patience, fortitude and tolerance in dealing with others and with the problems in the Jewish world. Not every issue needs a vitriolic broadsheet to be posted against the wrongdoers. Many times just ignoring the provocation is the best and holiest policy. And I believe that it would also be the wisest and most successful policy.

Publicity seeking, media bashing, and issuing scattershot statements rarely amounts to healthy policy and certainly is not in keeping with Torah values - "...its ways are ways of pleasantness and all of its paths lead to peace."

Experience has shown that honey captures more flies than does vinegar. A policy of public restraint would help place Torah and its value system in a more proper light for all Jewry.  
Shabat shalom.

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**Weekly Parsha :: VAYESHEV :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

Appearances often times deceive the beholder. In this week's parsha this human tendency to rush to judgment on the basis of external appearances and physical circumstances plays an important part in the narrative of the Torah. The brothers of Yosef misinterpret the cloak given to him by their father as a symbol of hatred towards them. "Why should he be allowed to dress differently than we?" is their complaint.

Parents who are fortunate to have a number of children will immediately recognize this situation and the whining that accompanies it. Yet out of this seemingly minor event, a great and historical tragedy and a fulfillment of a dire prophecy emerges. Yosef's attitude and his dreams certainly did not help the situation, but in the judgment of the Torah and its commentators, the brothers misread the situation and badly overreacted.

They would pay a great price for this misjudgment. They would now take every action and statement of Yosef as being a direct threat to them and their roles in founding the Jewish people. He was "different" than they were and "different" people often and regularly have been misunderstood and oftentimes needlessly and wrongfully persecuted in the history of Jewish society.

Yosef's physical beauty, his attention to his appearance and his brilliant and charming personality only intensified the hatred of his brothers towards him. He was far too "different" than they – and in the words of the Torah itself, the brothers never really recognized Yosef as the great, noble and holy person that he was until very late in their relationship with him.

In the Torah, we are told of the instance where Yehuda sees a woman sitting at the crossroads of a highway. He does not recognize her even though she is his daughter-in-law. She is dressed in a "different" manner and he immediately comes to the conclusion that because of the circumstances, she must be a harlot. He will be eternally and publicly shamed for mistaking Tamar's appearance - and out of this unlikely union the future of the Jewish people will arise – but it is obvious that this was not Yehuda's finest hour. He judged the woman by her appearance and he was mistaken. He will later admit publicly that she was the more righteous one.

Yosef is attractive and charming and well liked by all who come into contact with him. He is entrusted with everything in Potiphar's house. The wife of Potiphar misreads Yosef's appearance and is convinced that he will succumb to her wiles and seductions. The brothers of Yosef, who could not see past his cloak of many colors given to him by their father, will also be unable to see past the royal garments of Egyptian power that he wears.

Yosef recognizes his brothers but they do not recognize him. They see only a person clothed in the garb of an Egyptian viceroy standing before them. How painful it is and how destructive it is to have to be judged merely by appearance and raiment. In truth, the Torah teaches us that "humans only see physically what appears before their eyes but that the Lord, so to speak, sees into the heart and essence of the person."

Shabat shalom.

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**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayeshev**  
**For the week ending 17 December 2011 / 20 Kislev 5772**  
**by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - [www.seasonsofthemoon.com](http://www.seasonsofthemoon.com)**  
**Insights**

**Master Of War**

*(Yosef said to the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers) "If only you would think of me... and mention me to Pharaoh, then you would get me out of this building." (40:14)*

Something very strange happens on the twenty-fifth of the Hebrew month of Kislev. Two completely different festivals are observed.

One festival celebrates a military triumph by a small group of partisans who manage by their own bravery to overcome vastly superior forces and restore Jewish statehood to the Land of Israel. The other commemorates a supernatural victory against powers of darkness that wished to adulterate the Jewish People and their Holy Torah.

The bizarre thing is that both these festivals have the same name.

They are both called Chanuka.

The secular version of the Chanuka story makes Mattityahu and Yehuda Hamaccabee sound like characters out of a war movie. True, there's a seven-branched candelabra somewhere there at the back of the set, but Chanuka is really a nationalistic shoot-em-up where the good guys win and the bad guys lose and, well, G-d got written out of the plot at the first script meeting.

The other version of Chanuka focuses on the supernatural events that surround Chanuka. The miracle of the oil lasting eight days; of a small minority who manage to hold on to their Judaism against the blandishments of materialism and hedonism. True, there's a military victory somewhere in there, but it's a miraculous victory against impossible odds, a victory which is no more than the revelation of G-d's providential Hand.

There's a fine line between faith and folly. There's an equally fine line between thinking that the Jewish People win wars because we have the best tanks and planes and the best training.

In 1967, the Six Day War opened with a blistering attack on the Egyptian airfields by the Israeli air force. The Israeli air force managed to knock out some 90% of the Egyptian planes while they were still on the ground. Now, 90% is an interesting statistic — because it can't happen. Warplanes bombing a tiny ground target under fire can achieve 40%, maybe 50%. But 90% doesn't happen.

After the Six Day War ended, you couldn't buy a pair of tefillin in the whole of Israel. There were appeals in the United States for anyone who had a spare pair to send them to Israel. The Jewish People realized that G-d had given them a miraculous victory against five Arab armies on four fronts, and the upswell in the observance of Judaism was remarkable. Equally remarkable — and predictable — was the short-lived nature of this awakening. Nothing much had changed in three thousand years, and just as the Jewish People were capable of cavorting around a golden calf a few weeks after they had witnessed the splitting of the sea and all the miracles in Egypt, so too the Jewish People very soon forgot Who it was Who fights our wars, and were busy bragging about the invincible Israeli army.

So, as it were, to give us a little reminder of Who's really running things, some four years later, the Arabs attack again. This time they manage to make deep inroads into the heartland of the country. But the Arabs make a fatal mistake. They think that they will attack on Yom Kippur when everyone is fasting and weak.

They forget two things. One strategic and the other supernatural. Strategically, the most difficult thing about starting a war without a large standing army is to mobilize. The major problem is to find everyone. However, on Yom Kippur you can find everyone because almost everyone is in shul. So all you have to do is to take a truck drive from shul to shul and call out the names at the back. Also, the roads are empty so you can mobilize your army in about half the time it would normally take. Secondly, the Arabs forget to read their history books. If they'd paid closer attention, they'd have realized that, traditionally, the Jewish People always used to fast before going into battle to purify themselves before G-d. And even in the secular State of Israel, anyone with the remotest connection to his Judaism is davening his heart out in shul and the angels are taking his prayers upstairs to the King of Kings. Not a good day to attack really.

Again the same thing happens. A realization of a miraculous miracle followed by a return to "with my own power and the strength of my own hand" way of thinking.

So next time, G-d, as it were, says, "So you think it's your army that's winning these wars? I'll tell you what. Next time, your army will sit on its benches, and I will send the largest and most powerful navy in the world steaming half way around the world, and your army and your navy and your air force will do absolutely zero."

And that's exactly what happened in the Gulf War. I remember sitting in a taxi at the time, and this totally secular taxi driver was quoting me a verse. I think it was from the prophet Yishayahu. All about how G-d will tell us to go into a sealed room for a little while until the danger passes. "Who is like your people Israel?! One nation in the land!" Even the taxi drivers quote you the Prophets!

I also remember when the day the Gulf War ended. It "just happened" to be Purim. I went into my own sealed room and I ripped the plastic off the window and threw the window open wide to let in the sweet air of freedom wafting in the holy city of Jerusalem.

If I live to a hundred and twenty I don't think I'll ever have a Purim like that one.

And now, that same holy air is filled with the sounds of jihad, and not-so-distant guns, and the shrill threats of another Haman, and the promise of weapons that should keep us awake at night.

Isn't the message that G-d is sending us clear enough?

***"If only you would think of Me... and mention Me to Pharaoh, then you would get me out of this building."***

In this week's Torah portion Yosef asks the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers twice to intercede on his behalf to Pharaoh. By his lack of trust in G-d, by asking the Chamberlain twice, Yosef languished two further years in jail.

Rabbi Chaim of Brisk once asked Rabbi Shimon Shkop how long Yosef would have been kept in prison if he had asked the Chamberlain only one time to help secure his release.

Rabbi Shimon replied that if Yosef had asked only once, he would have spent only one year in prison.

Rabbi Chaim disagreed. "He wouldn't have had to spend any more time in prison at all. To try to secure his release by asking once is considered to be hishtadlut — the human effort that G-d expects of each of us. To ask twice showed a lack of trust in G-d. So it would have been two years or nothing." The Jewish People are faced yet again with the threat of war. Again there are those who rise, as they do in every generation, wishing to annihilate us. If we must fight we must fight with everything we have. With our bodies. With our minds. But mostly we must fight that little voice inside us that tells us that we ourselves are doing all this. The greatest fight is the fight to remember that whatever we do, there is only one Master of War.

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### **Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Parshas Vayeshev**

**A man discovered him, and behold! - He was blundering in the field; the man asked him, saying, "What do you seek?" (37:15)**

Yosef's father sent him to seek out his brothers and report back to him concerning their welfare. Chazal teach that Hashem sent the Malach, angel, Gavriel, in the likeness of a man, to lead Yosef to his brothers. This was all part of the Divine master plan that would eventually lead the entire family of Yaakov Avinu to descend to Egypt, as part of fulfilling the prophecy to Avraham Avinu. The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, interprets the "man's" question to Yosef homiletically. The man/angel was telling Yosef that when he - or any man - is lost, confused with life, its issues, circumstances and vicissitudes, he should not allow confusion to prevail. First and foremost, he should determine his personal goals; then he should deal with the issues. All too often, we are confronted with the challenges of life that bog us down, stunting our upward/forward mobility. We are basically stuck in the proverbial "rut." We do not know where to turn, and we do not have the skills to do it. The sage counsel is first to determine where we are going and what our goals are. Then, we need to remain focused on those objectives. When we lose our focus, everything suddenly becomes impossible to traverse. We are lost, because we do not know where we are going. A kite may fly around aimlessly in the air, but, as long as it is stabilized on the ground, it will not stray.

Every Jew must have a goal and remain focused on that goal. He must set standards and maintain them religiously, not deferring to every whim that he encounters. Even in Avodas HaKodesh, serving Hashem, one must have standards and priorities which are consistent in his life. Let the following

serve as an example: The Bais Yisrael makes the following observation concerning Yehudah's remark, "What gain will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?" (Bereishis 27:26). What did Yehudah mean by the phrase, "What gain will we have?"

The Bais Yisrael explains this based upon a kabbalah undertaken by the Chozeh m'Lublin. The Chozeh had a support system to protect him from falling into the clutches of the yetzer hora, evil-inclination. He had taken a kabbalah, accepted upon himself, never to do anything unless his actions would bring pleasure/benefit to Hashem. If his actions would not catalyze kavod Shomayim, the Chozeh held himself back from acting.

This, explains the Bais Yisrael, was Yehudah's intention when he asked his brothers, Mah betza ki naharog achinu? "What gain is there by killing our brother?" What will Hashem benefit from our actions? This is what the Targum Onkeles means when he translates betza as mamon, money. What profit is there from killing Yosef? Hashem will gain nothing. If Hashem's honor in the world will not be increased as a result of our action, then there is no reason to act.

This is how a Jew should live his life: with cheshbon, an accounting; with standards; with principles; with purpose. These are many words which all revert back to one word: focused. If one lives a focused life, he knows where he is heading and why. The raison d'etre for our actions should always be: Will Hashem benefit from this? Will it increase kavod Shomayim? To act without focus, without reason, aimlessly, without purpose, is to live life like one to whom Judaism has no meaning. We know better than that.

**Reuven heard, and he rescued him from their hand. (37:21)**

Reuven slowed the process, ultimately convincing his brothers not to be guilty of cold-blooded murder. Chazal teach that Reuven acted nonchalantly concerning his act of saving Yosef. He did not take it to heart and certainly not to his head. They say that had Reuven been aware that Hashem would have written in His Torah that Reuven was to be credited with saving Yosef, he would have taken Yosef right then and there and carried him on his shoulders back home to Yaakov Avinu. Reuven acted properly, but did not give his actions much thought.

A similar statement is made concerning Boaz, who gave Rus some meat to eat. The Megillah records this act of kindness for posterity. Chazal say that had Boaz known his simple act of decency was being given such distinguished coverage he would have fed Rus fattened calves. In other words, he would have gone all out for her. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 34:8) concludes, "In the past, a person would perform a mitzvah, and the Navi would record it. Now, if a person performs a mitzvah, who records it? Eliyahu HaNavi and Melech HaMoshiach." They are pretty impressive codifiers.

With the above in mind, we should reflect on the value of each mitzvah and our appreciation thereof. Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, notes that the Torah giants of old, Reuven and Boaz, were well aware of the intrinsic value of the mitzvos they were performing. Their error was in not recognizing that their actions were actually worthy of being included in the Torah. Rav Aharon distinguishes between a mitzvah that becomes Torah and one that does not. When one reads about Reuven's act of saving Yosef, he is actually studying Torah. He must recite Bircas HaTorah, the requisite blessing over Torah study. With every word of this sentence that he reads, he fulfills a mitzvas asei, positive commandment. Furthermore, he is not simply reading Jewish literature; he is studying Torah, which, in its own right, spiritually elevates and refines him.

Had Yehudah and Boaz known that their activity would achieve such critical acclaim, they would have acted more forcefully, with greater alacrity and moral perfection. So should we, when we are performing mitzvos. When we realize the awesome integral value of each mitzvah and the compelling nature of the great achievements we can catalyze, our entire attitude toward mitzvah performance will change drastically.

The Rosh Yeshivah takes this idea further. Imagine if Reuven could see into the future that Yosef - the brother whom he rescued - would become a leader and sustainer of the entire world. Millions of lives hung in the balance of his power. In addition, Yosef was the one brother who was born with the power of vanquishing Eisav. Boaz was the progenitor of David Hamelech and the Davidic dynasty. All of this happened as the result of a

"simple" act of chesed, kindness. We see now that there is no such thing as "simple." Everything is great. We never know what wheels we are setting in motion when we act correctly by performing a mitzvah.

This idea is especially significant with regard to those whose chosen vocation in life is Torah dissemination. We have no idea how far-reaching is our influence, how many lives are saved by our act of reaching out to a fellow Jew. It does not take much. One kind word, one smile, one pat on the back can change a disillusioned student's attitude and save him from spiritual extinction. The little we do now grows immensely over time. Can we imagine the reward of those who devote their lives to this endeavor?

**As she was taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong I am with child." (38:25)**

Interlaced within the story of Yosef's sale as a slave and eventual arrival in Egypt, is the story of Yehudah. At first, it seems misplaced, since it does not appear to have any relationship to the Yosef narrative. Chazal, however, explain that Yehudah was deposed as leader over the tribes, because he was not forceful enough to prevent the sale. Had he demanded that Yosef be released, he would have prevailed. He only saved him from death. For not completing his task, he was punished by Hashem with the eventual passing of his sons, Er and Onan. In the midst of this story, we meet Tamar, one of the true heroines of Klal Yisrael's long history. We have very little recorded of her pedigree and past - only her present, which dominates the narrative to such an extent that it is no wonder that she was to become the maternal progenitor of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

What did she do to earn her such distinction? The answer to this question is not what she did - but what she did not do. The Torah relates that Tamar was originally married to Er, Yehudah's eldest son, who was evil in the eyes of Hashem. He was punished with Heavenly excision. Yehudah instructed Onan, his second son, to perform Levirate marriage, by marrying the young widow. This would save Er's name. Realizing that a child born into this marriage would be regarded as belonging to Er, Onan took great care not to impregnate Tamar. This is a sin, and Onan was also prematurely called to his rightful place in the next world. Fearing that Shelah, the next brother, would also die, just as his two older brothers did, Yehudah told Tamar to wait until Shelah grew up. Time went by, Shelah grew up, and Yehudah had not yet given him to her. Tamar realized that this was not happening. Yehudah had no intentions of risking his third and last son.

Tamar was an agunah, stuck between a rock and a hard place. She could not marry anyone, since she was bound by law to the next brother, Shelah, who should become her husband, was being held back by Yehudah. What was a girl to do? She decided to embark on a daring course of action. She dressed herself up as a woman of ill-repute, and, when Yehudah went by on his way to the sheep-shearing, she negotiated with him concerning a liaison. Clearly, there was much more to the story than meets the eye, but, for present purposes, we will leave it as is. After negotiating a price, Tamar insisted on a security, which was provided by Yehudah. The next day, Yehudah sent a friend to pay the "woman," but she was gone - disappeared!

Three months later, Tamar began to "show." Word got out that Tamar, who was legally bound by the code of Levirate marriage, had had a relationship with someone. She was pregnant. Yehudah, the leader of the community, declared, "Take her out to be burnt." In an attempt to save her life and spare Yehudah any shame, Tamar surreptitiously sent the security to Yehudah, saying, "I became pregnant from the one who owns this." Suddenly, it all became clear to Yehudah. He realized his error and came to the conclusion that Tamar was a woman of exemplary character. She was prepared to die, rather than bring shame upon him. This took enormous courage and strength of character.

Her behavior became the model for future generations of how a Jew should act. Her conduct was the origin for the Talmudic dictum, "It is better for a person to throw himself into a fiery furnace, than to shame his neighbor in public." Indeed, much of Rabbinic thought on the subject of sparing another Jew shame is based upon Tamar's acute sensitivity to Yehudah. We can derive much from the incident of Tamar and Yehudah. She was a woman who, for all intents and purposes, was situated on the extreme edge of society, but who was prepared to die, rather than to shame her father-in-

law. This episode was the precursor of David Hamelech's birth and dynasty. His was a dynasty founded on the principle that emotional pain is at least as harmful as physical pain. Offending another Jew is like mortally wounding him. She understood that the loss of one's esteem is tantamount to the loss of life. Such a woman can - and did - infuse her descendants with respect for human dignity. For all generations, we are cognizant of the significance of moral greatness as taught by Tamar.

Stories abound concerning our sages' extreme concern for feelings of a fellow Jew. Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, related the following episode: A famous Maggid lectured in Yerushalayim one Shabbos afternoon. Since the drashah, discourse, was to begin in the very late afternoon, all of those assembled davened Minchah before the speech. One distinguished Rav had forgotten to daven Minchah before attending the lecture. As he saw the sun begin to set, he became increasingly nervous. What should he do? If he were to stand up and walk out, it would cause a commotion. To remain in his place meant missing Tefillas Minchah. His options were not very encouraging. He compromised by standing up and, with his face turned toward the speaker, he inched out very slowly. He was disturbed about his actions, worrying that he had acted improperly. He decided to visit the Chazon Ish to ask his opinion.

He presented his query to the Chazon Ish in a simple, straightforward manner: What does one do if he is attending a lecture and realizes that he had not yet davened Minchah? The Chazon Ish responded emphatically: "What is the question? To leave in the middle of the lecture is an insult to the speaker and a humiliation of a Torah scholar. Clearly, Tefillas Minchah does not override such a transgression. One remains in his seat until the conclusion of the speech!"

When we hurt a fellow Jew, we often ignore our actions, not maliciously, but rather, because we are unaware that we have caused someone pain. Either the victim has been proficient in concealing his pain, or our own indifference to the humiliation has allowed us to believe that we had not hurt the other fellow. Regardless of the reason, as long as one does not ask for - and receive - forgiveness, he is not absolved. Heaven must now intervene.

The following episode underscores this idea. A fellow, whom we will call Reb Shmuel, stood at the entrance to Har HaZeisim and surveyed the cemetery with his eyes. He was an individual to whom the cemetery was quite foreign. He rarely visited but, this time, the circumstances demanded that he do something unusual, something out-of-the ordinary. He was fortunate to have a large family, each one of his children being a source of much nachas. So, why was he here? It was the abject poverty. He just could not take it anymore. Another wedding was coming up, and he had no money. The shame, the ridicule for him and his family was simply too much to tolerate. As a final effort, he would visit his grandfather's grave. Reb Shmuel had been especially close with his sabba, grandfather, taking care of him during his twilight years. From clothing and feeding him, to taking him outside, he was always there. Perhaps his grandfather would intercede on his behalf.

It was not as if Reb Shmuel did not work. He was one of the premier rebbeim in the Yerushalayim educational system, but a single paycheck, a houseful of children, medical expenses and everything else had taken their toll. He approached his grandfather's grave, and the torrent of tears began in earnest. Amidst the weeping, he attempted to articulate his needs, entreating his grandfather's soul to please countenance him and intercede in Heaven on his behalf. As he stood lost in grief, he dozed off and began to dream.

In his dream, Reb Shmuel saw a vision of his grandfather standing before him. He immediately began to weep incessantly, beseeching his grandfather's assistance. In response, his grandfather presented a picture of Reb Shmuel's family. Before him stood his children, sons and daughters. The picture seemed perfect, except for one of his younger son's image. It appeared to have been airbrushed, hardly noticeable, very unclear. Something was wrong. Reb Shmuel began to shudder with fright. What was his grandfather telling him?

"My dear grandson," his grandfather began, "this is what was decreed against you. Yes, your dear son, Yankele (not his name), was summoned to return to his Source. When I heard this, I began to intercede on your

behalf. How could I forget the years of your life which you devoted to my care? Day and night, you were there. Shabbos, Yom Tov - a day did not go by that you did not avail yourself for me. I prayed and begged. The Heavenly Tribunal listened. Instead of taking your Yankele, it was decided that you should instead suffer from poverty. The forlorn, wretched feelings which have been a part of your life are a "replacement" for the grief you would have sustained with the loss of your child.

"Are you prepared to exchange poverty for Yankele?" asked his grandfather. "No! No! Heaven forbid!" screamed Reb Shmuel. "Under no circumstances. Whatever I have has suddenly become wonderful. Thank you! Thank you! But I have one question: What dreadful sin did I commit that warrants such punishment? I cannot remember anything that earthshattering in my life," said Reb Shmuel.

"Let me tell you," his grandfather said. "Years ago, when you were still a bachur, unmarried, you offended one of the fellows in your chaburah, social group. You never asked his mechilah, forgiveness."

What a frightening story. Because of a "harmless" insult or attitude of indifference to another Jew, one may lose everything.

There is more. When Yehudah attempted to dissuade his brothers from harming Yosef, he said, "What gain will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?" (Bereishis 37:26). Horav Yehudah Assad, zl, explains that Yehudah was intimating that if their hands were soiled with innocent blood, their power of prayer would be abrogated. He cites the pasuk in Yeshayah 1:15, "When you spread your hands (in prayer), I will hide my eyes from you; even if you were to intensify your prayer, I will not listen; Your hands are replete with blood," indicating that the prayers offered by one who has blood on his hands is worthless.

In the Talmud Bava Metzia 58b, Chazal compare the prohibition of humiliating someone to murder. "If anyone makes his friend's face turn white from shame in public, it is as if he has spilled his blood." In both cases, blood is caused to rise then fall. One who is embarrassed loses his natural color and turns white. Yet, we have no problem putting people down and going to shul immediately thereafter to offer our prayers. Indeed, the humiliation even takes place in shul! Yet, it does not seem to deter anyone. Perhaps, if we stop to think of the ramifications of our actions, we will think twice before saying or doing something that is inconsiderate of - or offensive to - others.

#### **After these things, his master's wife cast her eyes upon Yosef. (39:7)**

After spending a year in Potiphar's service, the stage was set for Potiphar's wife to express her desire for this handsome slave. Chazal teach that there is more to the story. Yosef ruminated, "My father was tested, my grandfather was tested, and I should not be tested?" Immediately upon hearing this, Hashem decided to grant Yosef his wish. He, too, would be tested. Chazal conclude that Yosef wanted to be tested, so that his latent strength of character would be freed and he could ultimately achieve more. Clearly, languishing in an Egyptian jail was not conducive to Yosef's hidden abilities.

The Midrash states that Yaakov Avinu experienced nisyonos, tests. Is this true? We find the Patriarch experiencing great troubles, but are those troubles to be classified as nisyonos? Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, suggests that listening to his mother's advice and presenting himself before Yitzchak Avinu dressed as Eisav, speaking in his vernacular so that he could obtain the berachos, blessings, was a test for Yaakov, the ish emes, man of truth. During his entire life he had personified truth. Now, he had to go against everything he believed in in order to fool Yitzchak, his father. This was a test. Furthermore, living twenty-two years in Lavan's house, in an environment permeated with moral and spiritual filth, where decadence and underhandedness went hand in hand, was also Yaakov's test. It took incredible self-control and perseverance to maintain himself on the same lofty spiritual perch as when he had originally come from Yitzchak's home. Yosef also sought to be tested, so that his hidden powers would emerge. Yosef got what he requested. This way, whatever powers were concealed within him would now be able to work for him and for his descendants.

Hashem tested Yosef atypically. His test was completely unlike that of his father and grandfather. Yitzchak was asked to give up his life. Avraham Avinu was thrown into a fiery cauldron. Yosef's test appears to be on a completely different level. His life was not in danger. No one was out to

kill him. Can his test be considered that compelling? Is it so difficult to maintain moral rectitude, to control one's basic desires and not act like an animal? Is this in any way similar to the noble acts of Avraham and Yitzchak, when their lives were actually in danger?

Rav Zaitchik explains that this is actually the meaning of nisayon, test. A test is a way of determining one's spiritual stamina, his ability to deal with adversity, to maintain his character and ethics on a high moral ground. The problem is that we think that once we have achieved prominence, we no longer need to worry concerning the "simple" tests. Who would think that a great tzaddik could fall into a situation that was inappropriate? What we do not realize is that it is the "little," "simple" tests that trip us up, that even the greatest spiritual personalities fall prey to these trials. One must always remain vigilant, never knowing from where the attack against his spiritual status will come. The test of Potiphar's wife leaves a subtle message: one must always be careful, never taking anything for granted. Too often, the things that could "never happen" - happen! We read about great people who make foolish mistakes. "There, if not for the grace of G-d, go I," should be on the lips of everyone. Yosef learned that it is often more difficult to triumph over the "small" test, than what one perceives to be the "big" test.

**Adon uzeinu, Tzur misgabeinu, Magen yisheinu, misgav baadeinu. Master of our strength, Rock of our security, Shield of our Salvation, secure a place for us.**

Horav Avraham ben Ha'Gra, zl, notes that man undergoes four periods in his life: naarus, childhood, bacharus, youth, shacharus, the prime of life, ziknah, old age. Naarus, childhood, is from birth until ten years of age, when, as a child, he is swift as a leopard, constantly on the go, running, climbing, moving to and fro, but he is not yet as strong as a youth or an adult. Hashem is Master of our strength; we recognize that our strength during this period of our life emanates from Him. From age ten until twenty years of age, we have achieved strength, but we are not yet firm and secure. Hashem is the Rock of our security. From age twenty until fifty, we are in our prime. We marry, raise a family, seek to earn a livelihood. Indeed, we are in constant need of Hashem's Salvation. At this point, He is the shield of our salvation. From age fifty until seventy, our strength begins to wane, and we need tremendous inner-strength and support, which Hashem is for us as Misgav baadeinu.

This prayer is our way of acknowledging that we could not develop in life without the constant supervision of the Almighty. During every stage of our development, He is there. Regrettably, many of us seem to forget this until He opens up our eyes, when He "pulls back" on His protection over us. Without His constant "eye" over us, we would have no chance.

Sponsored I'zechar nishmas R' Noach ben Yehuda Aryeh z"l niftar 22 Kislev 5726 by his family

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**Person in the Parsha**

**Rabbi Weinreb's Torah Column, Parshat Vayeshev**

*Sponsored in memory of Nathan and Louise Schwartz a"h*

#### **Looking Inward**

"We are stumped," reported Richard on behalf of the little group, who had just begun the Joseph story. "The narrative was fascinating, but we found it difficult to identify basic Jewish concepts in the midst of this intriguing plot."

Simon interrupted, something which was unusual for him, and reminded us of his background in the study of literature. "You know that I teach English literature for a living, and I found the storyline in the assigned reading of Parshat Vayeshev, (Genesis 37:1-40:23) to be a model for a great literary work. It had everything: suspense, drama, conflict, and even romance. But it was hard for me to find religious or moral messages in this text."

Even Leon, who somehow was always able to see what others could not, was at a loss. "The story is great," he said, "and I can hardly wait for next week's assigned readings to see how it all turns out. But I must confess that I too could not figure out the basic Jewish concepts that we were supposed to learn this week."

I empathized with the group and pointed out to them that the narrative sections of the Torah often contain plots so rich and fascinating that the underlying messages are often difficult to ascertain. Traditional commentaries are up against the same challenge yet, somehow, are always able to discern very powerful and very relevant teachings in all of the biblical stories.

I suggested that the class attempt a technique which I have found useful when faced with that challenge. I must confess that this technique is drawn from my background in the field of psychology. "What I do," I told Richard, Simon, and Leon, "is try to find an event, a passage, or even a phrase or word which speaks to me personally. Somehow, in the interface between the text and my inner self, I find a universal message. Let's try it." The class opened their Chumashim, and a five-minute period of absolute silence ensued. Each member of the class was deeply engaged in both scrutinizing the text and meditating upon their own subjective experiences. As each pair of eyes was lifted from the text, I realized that the time to ask for their verbal response had been reached. I saw in each pair of eyes an illumination, as if all three students had been enlightened with some great new truth. I knew now that I would not have to coax an answer from any of them, but I would, rather, have to deal with their competing efforts to gain my attention.

Richard did not wait for me to recognize him, but immediately began the discussion. "What struck me," he said, "were these two verses: 'And Israel loved Joseph above his other sons... and made for him a ketonet pasim [a coat of many colors]. And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, and they came to hate him and could not speak together peacefully.'" (Genesis 37:3-4)

Richard then burst into tears. The text had touched a sore spot in his soul. In a deeply personal way, he continued to relate how his own father had favored his older brother, and how he had been struggling all of his life to impress his father and to gain his father's approval. The class listened attentively to Richard's poignant confession and allowed him to conclude: "The basic Jewish teaching is clear: a father must not favor one child over the other. The consequences may be dire. The Jewish people's descent into exile traces back to the fact that Jacob favored Joseph."

I made a note to myself to inform the class at a later time that the Talmud itself (Masechet Shabbat 10b) found the same lesson in the text that had been the focus of Richard's response.

Leon then assumed the floor, with a similar depth of disclosure. "You know by now that I have always looked for approval from others. The way I act in this group is the way I act in the rest of my life. I manipulate the dialogue so that I impress others. As I perused this week's text again just now, I found myself envious ironically, of Reuben. The Bible tells us about Reuben's futile attempt to save Joseph from his brothers' hands and to return him to his father (Genesis 37:22). Reuben's heroic attempt, although unsuccessful, is recorded for all time and eternity. That's the kind of recognition that I deeply crave."

Once again, I made a note to myself. Leon had hit upon a concept not to be found in the Talmud itself, but rather in the responsa of the medieval Rabbi Solomon Ben Aderet, who ruled on the basis of this text that it was proper to publicize the names of those who did good works.

I and the rest of the class waited for Simon's response in suspense. What deeply personal emotion would he express? After all, he was the shy one in the class, the one who was most withdrawn. We were all taken aback when he began his remarks in a confident voice.

"There was something about the story of Judah and Tamar that transfixed me. I couldn't quite put my finger on it until we had those few moments of quiet contemplation. It was then that I realized that Tamar had the opportunity to identify her father-in-law, Judah, as the one who had impregnated her. Instead, she just points to the few objects he left with her and says, 'Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.' (Genesis 38:25)

"I have gained a reputation in this group of being the one who is most shy and most sensitive. But I think we are all beginning to learn that we are all quite sensitive individuals. The basic Jewish concept that I learned from Tamar's unwillingness to identify Judah by name is that one must be ready

to allow oneself to be executed by fire rather than put another person to shame. Embarrassing someone is in a certain sense akin to murder."

This time, I immediately shared with the class the Talmudic source for the basic Jewish concept which Simon had come up with on his own:

"Class, each of you is on to something. Each of you has discovered a principle which is to be found in our traditional sources. Richard, what you said is to be found in the Talmud. Leon, a rabbi in the Middle Ages already thought along your lines. And Simon, here is what the Talmud says about the verse that you've connected with:

'Why did not Tamar simply name Judah? Said Rav Zutra the son of Tuviah in the name of Rav: to teach us that it is preferable that a person allow himself to be cast into a fiery furnace than to embarrass another person in public.'" (Sotah 10b)

Once again, my little class of three, with no formal Jewish education to speak of, had independently recreated three basic Jewish teachings: that parents not favor one child over another, that good deeds be publicized, and that embarrassing another is a serious crime indeed.

The class left the room that evening with a sense of having accomplished at least two things: they each had listened sympathetically to another person's sharing of his soul, and they had each been able to transcend the details of a fascinating story and find therein universal moral lessons.

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### **Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas VaYeishev**

#### *The Image Of Father In The Window Saved Him*

In Parshas VaYeishev, Yosef rose to become the overseer of the house of Potiphar. Eventually, Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Yosef. The pasuk [verse] teaches, "And Yosef came home to do his work..." [Bereshis 39:11] At that time, Mrs. Potiphar tried to seduce him. According to one opinion in the Talmud, Yosef haTzadik's intention, when he entered the house that day, was in fact to be intimate with her, but at that very moment, the image of his father appeared to him from the window and caused him to abstain from carrying out his intentions.

The Talmud relates that a certain Roman matron asked Rav Yosi the following question: How can it be that a 17-year-old boy, who has been away from his family and all family influence, immersed in the sensuality of Egyptian society -- how was it possible for him to be able to withstand this temptation? The Talmud [Sotah 36b] elaborates that it was that vision of his father in the window telling him "Yosef, in the future your brethren will want to inscribe your name among the stones of the Ephod worn by the Kohen Gadol, together with the names of the other tribes. Do you want to do something that will cause your name to be blotted out from amid st the names of my other sons? Do you want to have the title a shepherd of prostitutes?" When Yosef heard that, he backed off. This fear of losing his connection to his father is what held him back from sinning.

By natural instinct and logic, as the Roman matron asked Rav Yosi, this temptation required super human powers for a 17-year-old young man to resist. However, it was the image of Yaakov -- how can I do this to my father? -- that held Yosef back.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky makes two interesting observations. This image only works if the father has "currency" with his son. If the father does not have "currency" with the son, his appearance in the window is not going to save the day. Just as there is a concept [Chagiga 15b] that "If a teacher appears (in stature) as an Angel of G-d, then one seeks the words of Torah from his mouth," so too it is the case that if a FATHER appears (in stature) to his children like an Angel of G-d, then and only then will be able to have influence on them. We as parents need to act in a manner that will cause it to be simply impossible for our children to contemplate "how could I ever let my father down and do this to him?"

This is one of the foundations of child rearing -- that a father needs to gain respect and prestige in the eyes of his children. He has to maintain credibility and inspire love and admiration, such that one's children would never contemplate harming their father's reputation or expectations of them.

There was once a Jew who live in Baltimore, Mr. Harry K. Wolpert, who came here in the 1920s. For many years, he was the chairman of the Board

of Ner Israel Rabbinical College. He was a student of Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, the Kamenitzer Rosh HaYehsiva and learned under him in Kaminetz. When Mr. Wolpert came to Baltimore in the 1920s, it was almost impossible to make a living without working on Shabbos. Like so many people of his generation, he faced the great test of earning a living that "If you do not come on Saturday, do not bother coming on Monday either." He relates that he was on the verge of taking such a job that required a six-day workweek. However, he was stopped by the image of his Rebbe, Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He could not do it to his Rebbe. That literally held him back and he remained a Sabbath observant and honest Jew for all of his 101 years.

Rather than Yaakov Avinu appearing in the window as by Yosef haTzadik, Rav Baruch Ber appeared in the window. This Chazal is telling us that we need to have that type of relationship with our children, such that they love and respect us and want to remain attached to us, thereby never doing anything that puts that relationship at risk.

In Parshas B'Shalach, Rav Yaakov Kamensky writes that Yosef HaTzadik's action enabled the entire incident of the Splitting of the Red Sea. A Medrash states that it was by merit of Yosef's bones (being transported from Egypt back to the Land of Israel) that the Red Sea split, allowing the Jews to pass through. The Medrash derives this from the pasuk "the Sea saw and it fled (vayanas)" [Tehillim 114:3], which uses the same word as when it says "Yosef left his garment in her hand and he ran out (vayanas)" [Bereshis 39:12]. The two "vayanas" words imply a midah k'neged mida – Yosef's super-natural vayanas was the zchus that enabled the super natural Krias Yam Yuf. The Yam Suf could resist deviating from its nature until confronted by Yosef, who deviated from his nature.

Rav Yaakov makes the following observation. By the Splitting of the Sea, the Almighty contemplated drowning the Egyptians and saving the Jews. However, the Midas Hadin [the Attribute of Justice] complained that "these are idol worshippers and those are idol worshippers". In other words, why drown one group of idolaters to save another group of idolaters? The answer to this question is that the Jews are different. They are different because just like the Roman matron could not understand what power held back Yosef from committing that act of adultery, the Almighty could point back and say, "Yes they may be idolaters, but they are still different from the Egyptians. A nation that can have someone like Yosef within their midst, is a nation on a different level. This is a nation that I want to save, because they can produce a Tzadik such as Yosef and in that merit I am going to save them."

### ***Sometimes It Is Better Not To Say "Please"***

At the end of the parsha, Yosef is in prison. He interprets the dream of one of Pharaoh's advisers. He asks this advisor for a favor: (V'asisa nah imadi chessed) "When you will be released from prison, please intercede with Pharaoh to have me released as well." Rashi says regarding the words "V'Asisa nah..." that the word "nah" indicates a request (please).

This seems strange. Someone who is already up to Parshas VaYeshev should already know that the meaning of the word "Nah" is "please." Why is Rashi telling us this again? Rashi already mentioned it in connection with "Kach nah es bincha" (Please take your son) [Bereshis 22:2]. And Rashi says it earlier in this parsha in connection with Tamar "Haker nah" (Please recognize...) [Bereshis 38:25]

The Shemen haTov answers, based on Chazal's criticism of Yosef for -- based on his spiritual level -- putting too much faith in the Wine Butler (Sar haMashkim): by mentioning twice the expression "remember me (to Pharaoh)" Yosef had to spend two more years in prison.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik once met Rav Shimon Shkop and asked, "If Yosef would have only mentioned 'remember me' once to the Sar HaMashkim, how many additional years would he have had to spend in prison?" Rav Shimon responded that since Chazal say that he had to spend two years in prison for mentioning it twice, most likely he would have had to spend one year if he had mentioned it once. Rav Chaim said "No. For mentioning it once, there would have been no punishment at all." Mentioning it once would have been legitimate "hishtadlus" [making appropriate effort to take care of oneself]. Saying it twice shows a lack of faith in G-d by overdoing

the hishtadlus. That lack of faith encompasses both of Yosef's requests and such both are deserving of punishment.

Similarly, the Shemen haTov says that the addition of the word "nah" (pretty please) indicates that Yosef was becoming too reliant on the Sar HaMashkim and having too much faith in the Sar HaMashkim's ability to save him and not having enough faith in the Almighty's ability to save him. This is why Rashi once again emphasizes the meaning of the word Nah in this pasuk. It was an unnecessary request.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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## **Rav Kook List**

### **Rav Kook on the Torah Portion**

#### **Vayaishev: Tamar's Sacrifice**

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of the peculiar story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar occurred after Judah was informed that the young widow had been behaving loosely and was pregnant. Judah meted out a harsh punishment for her promiscuity: "Take her out and have her burned" (Gen. 38:24).

Confronted with such a severe sentence, Tamar could have easily pointed an accusing finger at Judah. After all, it was Judah who had made her pregnant, not knowing the true identity of the 'prostitute' he had met on the road to Timna. Incredibly, Tamar chose to be silent. Only as she was led out for her punishment, did Tamar remark enigmatically, "I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of these articles" (Gen. 38:25). When Judah heard that cryptic message, he immediately realized that her pregnancy was not the result of promiscuity, but a form of yibum (levirate marriage) that Tamar had only been able to consummate through deception.

Why didn't Tamar save her life by clearly identifying her father-in-law - and judge - as the person responsible?

The Talmud derives an amazing lesson from Tamar's selfless act:

"It is better to throw oneself into a fiery furnace than to shame another person in public" (Berachot 43b).

This remarkable statement raises two questions. First of all, is honor really such an important thing? Did not the Sages teach (Avot 4:21) that the pursuit of honor and fame is a character trait that can "drive one from the world"?

Secondly, there are only three crimes - murder, idolatry, and illicit relations - so grievous that it is preferable to die rather than transgress them. Why was Tamar willing to be put to death so as not to put Judah to shame?

#### **Superficial Honor versus Inner Worth**

To answer the first question, we must distinguish between two types of honor. The first is an illusory honor based on external acquisitions - wealth, position, fame, and so on. Pursuing this type of honor is certainly a negative trait, a trait that can cause people to lose their way and squander their lives on inconsequential matters.

There is, however, a second form of honor, based on awareness of our true inner worth as human beings created in God's image. Recognition of our inner dignity, and an aversion to a life of ignominy, has an opposite effect to the pursuit of superficial honor. This awareness is the very foundation of morality and life. It raises our spirits to value the nobility of spiritual life and Divine knowledge.

In an essay describing our generation's need to deepen its appreciation for the spiritual side of the universe, through the study of the Torah's esoteric teachings, Rav Kook wrote:

"When the world makes advances in its superficial culture, it simultaneously declines in its inner worth. This deterioration is due to the phenomenon that, with the advance of culture's external values, the eye is increasingly captivated by superficialities, and learns to belittle inner awareness. Due to this process, humanity's true worth continually dwindles. The world's redemption is dependent upon the restoration of our inner perceptions." (Orot HaKodesh vol. I, p. 96)

Human life has value only when accompanied by a sense of honor and dignity. It is preferable to forfeit life in this world rather than publicly shame another person, permanently disgracing him and ruining his honor. Such a public defaming will bring about the loss of all value in living, a slow and degrading demise.

In practice, however, it seems that one should not take such a drastic step. With time, a life lived fully can heal and restore all lost honor. Nonetheless, those with a noble and sensitive soul should feel that their own will to live is weakened, if survival must come at the expense of another's public disgrace and humiliation.

For this reason, the Sages did not write, "One is required to throw himself into a fiery furnace," but rather, "It is better." This is how we should feel, even if in practice it does not come to that.

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 191)

Comments and inquiries may be sent to: [mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com](mailto:mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com)

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### **Haftorah - Parshas Vayeishev - Amos 2:6 - 3:8 by Rabbi Dovid Siegel ([www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))**

This week's haftorah sensitizes us to the severity of injustice. The prophet Amos begins by informing us of the limits of Hashem's tolerance. Hashem says, "I can be patient over the three offenses of the Jewish people, but the fourth is inexcusable. Namely, the sale of the righteous for silver and the pauper for shoes. They anticipate the dirt placed on the head of the impoverished." (2:6, 7) Amos admonishes the Jewish people here for their insensitivity towards injustice. He complains about the judges who would bend the law for nominal sums and exchange justice for an inexpensive pair of shoes. They would discriminate against the poor and even drag the impoverished through the dirt when they refused to comply with their unjustified sentence. Over these Hashem expresses serious disturbance and declares them unforgivable.

The Radak, in explanation of the above passages, magnifies this disturbance and interprets the three offenses mentioned here to be the three cardinal sins - idolatry, incest and murder. Hashem explains that the most cardinal sins do not receive an immediate response from Above. For these Hashem is somewhat patient and allows the offender the opportunity to repent and correct his outrageous behavior. But the injustice shown to the poor evokes Hashem's immediate response. Rabbeinu Bachya (see introduction to our Parsha) explains the basis for this and reminds us that the poor place their total trust in Hashem. Their financial resources do not command any respect or assistance from others which forces them to place their total trust in Hashem. Therefore, Hashem pledges to come immediately to their defense and responds harshly to any injustice done to them.

The Pirkei D'Reb Eliezer (Chapter 38) sees in the above passages a reference to the infamous sale of Yoseif Hatzaddik by his brothers, the tribes of Israel. Chazal explain that the brothers sold Yoseif for the equivalent of twenty silver dollars and that each brother purchased a pair of shoes with his portion of the money, two silver dollars. According to R' Eliezer, this is the incident Amos refers to when reprimanding the Jewish people for selling the righteous for silver and the pauper for shoes. The prophet tells us that this sin was unforgivable and was viewed with greater severity than every cardinal offense. With this statement the prophet alludes to the fact that the greatest scholars of Israel, the ten holy martyrs would be brutally murdered in atonement for this sin. Hashem said that the sale of Yoseif, unlike all other sins, could never be overlooked and that one day the greatest Tannaim (Mishnaic authors) would suffer inhuman torture and be taken from us in atonement for this sin. No offense of the Jewish people ever evoked a response so harsh as this one and the torturous death of the ten martyrs remains the most tragic personal event in all of Jewish history.

This week's haftorah shares with us an important perspective regarding the offense of Yoseif's sale by focusing on a particular aspect of the offense. As we glean from the prophet's words it was not the actual sale that aroused Hashem's wrath, rather the condition of the sale. Amos refers to the indignity shown to Yoseif and the insensitivity towards his feelings, being sold for an inexpensive pair of shoes. When lamenting the ten

martyrs during the liturgy in the Yom Kippur service we accent this dimension and recount that the wicked Roman ruler filled the entire courtroom with shoes. This was his fiendish way of reminding the martyrs about their indignant behavior and insensitivity towards their brother.

The upshot of this is that there was some room to justify the actual sale of Yoseif. The Sforno (37:18) explains that the brothers truly perceived that their life was in serious danger as long as Yoseif remained in their surroundings. After closely following his actions and anticipating the outcome of his inexcusable attitude and behavior the brothers found it necessary to protect themselves from his inevitable attack of them. Although they totally misread the entire situation from the start it can be argued that their precautionary measures were somewhat justified and permissible. However, Sforno draws our attention to their insensitivity during these trying moments. The brothers are quoted to have reflected on their decision and said, "But we are guilty for observing his pain when he pleaded with us and we turned a deaf ear to it." (Breishis 42:21) Even they faulted themselves for their insensitivity towards their brother. When he pleaded for his life they should have reconsidered and adjusted their harsh decision. It is this insensitivity that the prophet refers to when focusing upon the sale for shoes. Apparently, they purchased these shoes in exchange for Yoseif to indicate that he deserved to be reduced to dirt. Their statement reflected that whoever challenged their authority deserved to be leveled and reduced to nothing. (see Radal to Pirkei D'Eliezer)

This expression of indignation was inexcusable and required the most severe of responses. Hashem chose the illustrious era of the Tannaim to respond to this offense. During those times a quorum of prominent scholars presided over Israel which personified the lessons of brotherhood and sensitivity. An elite group was chosen for the task, including: the Prince of Israel, the High Priest and Rabbi Akiva who authored the statement, "Love your friend as yourself" is the fundamental principle of the Torah." In atonement for the inexcusable sale Hashem decreed upon these martyrs the most insensitive torturous death ever to be experienced. The Tzor Hamor (see Seder Hadoros year 3880) explains that the lesson this taught the Jewish people was eternal. After this horrifying experience the Jewish people were finally cleansed from all effects of the infamous offense done to Yoseif. From hereafter they could be authentically identified as a caring and sensitive people.

From this we learn how sensitive we must be and even when our harsh actions are justified we must exercise them with proper sensitivities. As difficult as the balance may be we must always feel for our Jewish brethren and show them the proper dignity and compassion they truly deserve.

Rabbi Dovid Siegel is Rosh Kollel of Kollel Toras Chaim of Kiryat Sefer, Israel.

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### **Weekly Halacha by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt**

#### **Tallis Katan: Common Questions**

Question: Do men have a halachic obligation to wear a tallis katan?

Discussion: According to the Midrash quoted by Rashi in Parashas Noach, the Jewish People were rewarded with the mitzvah of tzitzis, which are attached to a garment, because our forebear, Shem, took pains to preserve the modesty of his drunken father Noach by covering him with a garment. The Talmud<sup>1</sup> states that one who is scrupulous in his observance of the mitzvah of tzitzis will merit "to see the Shechinah."

But is one halachically required to wear a garment with tzitzis fringes attached to it, or is it merely optional?

Although Biblical law does not require one to put tzitzis on a garment unless the garment that he is wearing has four square corners, which most garments nowadays do not have, it is fitting and proper for every male to wear a tallis katan (a small four-cornered garment) all day and thereby incur the obligation to wear tzitzis. In so doing, he fulfills an important mitzvah, one that serves as a constant reminder of all of the other mitzvos of the Torah.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, it has become customary for all G-d-fearing men to wear a tallis katan all day.<sup>3</sup> Since this has become the prevalent custom, one may not deviate from it, and nowadays, one is

obligated to wear a tallis katan all day long.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, those who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance do not walk four cubits (approximately eight feet) without tzitzis.<sup>5</sup>

Question: Which blessing, if any, does one recite over a tallis katan?

Discussion: Married men and those who wear a large tallis during davening need not recite a separate blessing over their tallis katan. Rather, when they recite the proper blessing over the tallis gadol, they should have the tallis katan in mind.<sup>6</sup> Unmarried men who do not wear a tallis gadol recite the blessing of Al mitzvas tzitzis on a tallis katan.<sup>7</sup> If the tallis katan is of questionable size or material, a blessing should not be said.<sup>8</sup>

Although all married<sup>9</sup> men should wear a tallis gadol during Shacharis, they should not forgo davening with a minyan if a tallis gadol is unavailable.<sup>10</sup> [In regard to tefillin, however, it is preferable to daven without a minyan than to daven without tefillin.<sup>11</sup>]

Before the blessing on a tallis gadol or katan is recited, the tzitzis fringes must be separated from one another so that they are not entangled.<sup>12</sup> While some poskim imply that fringes which are entangled invalidate the tzitzis and the mitzvah cannot be fulfilled at all,<sup>13</sup> most poskim agree that b'diavad one could fulfill the mitzvah even with entangled tzitzis strings.<sup>14</sup> [All poskim agree that if the fringes are tied (or glued) together, then the mitzvah has not been fulfilled and the blessing said over them is in vain.<sup>15</sup>] Accordingly, while we are careful to separate the tzitzis whenever possible, we forgo doing so when we cannot. Thus, on Shabbos and Yom Tov one should not separate the tzitzis strings before putting on his tallis, since some poskim maintain that separating severely entangled tzitzis strings is a violation of makeh b'patish.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, if taking time to separate the tzitzis will cause one to miss tefillah b'tzibbur, one should rely on the lenient view and wear the tallis even though the tzitzis strings have not been separated.<sup>17</sup>

Often, the chulyos (the top segment of the fringes which is wound and knotted) become unraveled or loosened. If this happens, the fringes should be rewound and knotted. On Shabbos and Yom Tov, however, this is strictly forbidden. Tightening or knotting tzitzis fringes on Shabbos may even be Biblically prohibited.<sup>18</sup>

Question: May one wear a tallis katan made out of cotton?

Discussion: There is a dispute among the Rishonim as to whether it is a Biblical requirement to attach tzitzis to a four-cornered garment made of cotton, or only to a garment made out of wool or linen. While some Rishonim hold that only woolen and linen garments are Biblically obligated in tzitzis, others include cotton as well. Both views are quoted in the Shulchan Aruch,<sup>19</sup> and the Rama rules according to the view that maintains that cotton garments do incur the Biblical obligation of tzitzis. Nevertheless, many poskim advise a G-d-fearing person to wear only a tallis katan made from wool and thereby fulfill the mitzvah according to all views.<sup>20</sup> Other poskim, however, do not insist on a wool garment, and there were eminent Torah scholars<sup>21</sup> who wore a tallis katan made out of cotton.

Question: May women “make tzitzis”—i.e., attach tzitzis strings to a garment (tallis katan or tallis gadol)?

Discussion: The Talmud<sup>22</sup> excludes women from the writing of tefillin since they are not commanded to wear tefillin. Following this line of reasoning, Rabbeinu Tam ruled that since women are not commanded to wear tzitzis, they are also not permitted to attach the tzitzis to the garment.<sup>23</sup> Most Rishonim, however, do not agree with this ruling and allow women to be involved in all phases of tzitzis production. The Shulchan Aruch<sup>24</sup> rules with the majority. Nevertheless, in deference to the minority opinion (and for other reasons as well), the Rama advises that l'chatchilah women should not be allowed to put tzitzis on a garment.<sup>25</sup> Although one should follow the Rama's directive,<sup>26</sup> all poskim agree that after the fact, if the tzitzis were attached by women, the tzitzis are kosher and need not be restrung.<sup>27</sup>

Question: May a minor attach tzitzis fringes to a garment?

Discussion: Based on the previously mentioned Rama, some poskim rule that a minor below the age of bar mitzvah should not attach tzitzis to a

garment. Other poskim feel that minors are not excluded and may attach tzitzis to a garment even l'chatchilah. Mishnah Berurah recommends that l'chatchilah it is appropriate to be stringent.<sup>28</sup>

A minor, however, may prepare tzitzis for himself or for another minor. Even when he becomes bar mitzvah, he does not have to unknot the tzitzis and restrung them.<sup>29</sup>

There is, however, another issue concerning minors attaching tzitzis to a garment. When tzitzis are placed on a garment, they must be attached with the intention of “l'shem mitzvas tzitzis,” for the sake of the mitzvah of tzitzis. Since a minor may not be mature enough to concentrate properly, he may not attach tzitzis to a garment unless he is under the supervision of an adult. If a minor was not properly supervised, then the tzitzis must be removed and reattached properly.<sup>30</sup>

Question: Is it permitted to attach tzitzis fringes to a garment at night?

Discussion: Some poskim recommend not doing so.<sup>31</sup> Their reasoning is based on the halachic principle of ta'aseh (you should make) v'lo min ha-asui (it should not be automatically done): Since one is not obligated to wear tzitzis at night,<sup>32</sup> it follows that one cannot produce kosher tzitzis at night, either. The vast majority of poskim, however, reject this argument.<sup>33</sup> The Mishnah Berurah does not discuss this issue, but the Chafetz Chayim is quoted<sup>34</sup> as permitting tzitzis to be attached at night. The Chazon Ish is reported<sup>35</sup> as having asked that tzitzis be prepared for him at night.

1 Menachos 43b, quoted in O.C. 24:6.

2 Bamidbar 15:39 (quoted in O.C. 24:1): “That you may see it and remember all the commandments of Hashem and perform them.” In addition, the Talmud (Menachos 41a) says that wearing a tallis katan protects a person from Hashem's wrath.

3 Aruch ha-Shulchan 8:2; Rav Y.E. Henkin (Eidus l'Yisrael, pg. 114); Tzitz Eliezer 8:4; Yechaveh Da'as 4:2.

4 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:4. See also Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:20-25.

5 Mishnah Berurah 8:1. See Halichos Shelomo 1:3-16, Devar Halachah 25, and Tzitz Eliezer 14:49, who say that the tallis katan should be left on even if one is suffering from the heat. See The Daily Halachah Discussion, pgs. 58-60, for an elaboration.

6 Mishnah Berurah 8:24, 30; Aruch ha-Shulchan 8:16. Some poskim rule that if there will be a “long break” until the tallis gadol is put on, a blessing should be said on the tallis katan. See The Daily Halachah Discussion, pgs. 307-311, for the various views.

7 Rama, O.C. 8:6.

8 Mishnah Berurah 8:17. See The Daily Halachah Discussion, pgs. 306-307, for the proper dimensions of a tallis katan.

9 The Sephardic and German custom is that unmarried men wear a tallis gadol, too.

10 Mor u'Ketziyah 25; Imrei Yosher 2:201-2. See Halichos Shelomo 1:3-3 who debates this issue.

11 Mishnah Berurah 66:40. See, however, Minchas Yitzchak 2:107.

12 O.C. 8:7. On Shabbos and Yom Tov, however, the tzitzis should not be separated from one another; Halichos Shelomo 1:3-5.

13 See Artzos ha-Chayim and Beir Halachah 8:7, s.v. tzarich.

14 Aruch ha-Shulchan 8:13; Chazon Ish, O.C. 3:9.

15 Chazon Ish, O.C. 3:9.

16 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 8:9; Mateh Efrayim (Elef le-Mateh) 584:9; Kaf ha-Chayim 8:30; Halichos Shelomo 1:3-5.

17 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 9:7; Mishnah Berurah 8:18; Aruch ha-Shulchan, 8:13.

18 Ketzos ha-Shulchan (Badei ha-Shulchan 123:4); Az Nidberu 3:22; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 15:53.

19 O.C. 9:1.

20 Chayei Adam 11:5; Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 9:4; Mishnah Berurah 9:5; Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:2; 2:1; 3:1; 3:52. In Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:20-25, Rav Feinstein adds that one who suffers from the heat is not required to wear a wool tallis katan, although he himself was particular to do so.

21 Chazon Ish (quoted in Shoneh Halachos 9:1) and Rav Y.Y. Kanievsky (quoted in Orchos Rabbeinu 3:188) based on the ruling of the Gra (Ma'asei Rav 17). There are several reasons given as to why the Gra ruled so; see Tzitzis-Halachah Pesukah, pg. 77.

22 Gittin 45b.

23 Many poskim add that other mitzvos (i.e. placing sechach) are included in this prohibition as well. See, however, Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:40-3.

24 O.C. 14:1.

- 25 The Rama's restriction, however, applies specifically to inserting the strings through the hole and knotting the first set of chulyos and the double knot immediately following; all the rest may be done by women l'chatchilah; Mishnah Berurah 14:1.
- 26 Aruch ha-Shulchan 14:7 refers to this stringency as a chumra b'alma.
- 27 Mishnah Berurah 14:5.
- 28 In 14:4 he quotes both views without a decision. In Beir Halachah, s.v. l'hatzrich, he rules that it is appropriate to be stringent.
- 29 Beir Halachah 14:1, s.v. l'hatzrich, since we view that situation as a b'diavad, and b'diavad the tzitzis are valid according to all views. See Even Yisrael 9:63 and Chanoch l'Na'ar 9, note 16, who question this leniency.
- 30 Mishnah Berurah 14:4.
- 31 Peri Megadim (Mishbetzos) 18:1; Tosefos Chayim on Chayei Adam 11:1; Halichos Yisrael 1:7, quoting Rav Y.Z. Gustman.
- 32 The Talmud (Menachos 43a) derives from the verse "and you should see them" that there is no mitzvah of tzitzis at night.
- 33 Da'as Torah 18:1; Tehillah l'David 18:4; Aruch ha-Shulchan 14:7; Kaf ha-Chayim 18:2; Minchas Yitzchak 9:8; Halichos Shelomo 1:3-23; Yabia Omer 8:3.
- 34 Rivevos Efrayim, O.C. 3:27; Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:13.
- 35 Dinim v'Hanhagos (Chazon Ish) 2:11; Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 3, pg. 188.
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- Rabbi Neustadt is the Yoshev Rosh of the Vaad Harabbonim of Detroit and the Av Beis Din of the Beis Din Tzedek of Detroit. He could be reached at dneustadt@cordetroit.com

## What Will the Neighbors Think? – Understanding the Halachos of Maris Ayin

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

*When Yehudah's friend the Adulami was unable to locate Tamar, Yehudah reacts: "What can I do? This will lead to an embarrassing situation." This sounds like a good week to study:*

Question # 1: My boss asked me to attend a lunch meeting with a new client in a non-kosher restaurant. May I attend the meeting, or do I violate maris ayin if I am seen in a treif restaurant? If it is permissible to attend the meeting, may I order a cup of coffee or a fruit plate?

Question # 2: When I serve coffee after a fleishig meal, I like to put non-dairy creamer on the table in a small pitcher because the original container is unsightly. Recently, someone told me that I may not place the creamer on the fleishig table unless it is in its original container. Is this true?

Question # 3: Hyman Goldman would like to retire and sell his business, Hymie Goldman's Bakery, to a non-Jew who will keep it open on Shabbos. Must he require the gentile to change the shop's name?

Question #4: My not-yet-observant cousin is making a bar mitzvah in a Reform temple. We have a good relationship, and he is very curious about exploring authentic Judaism. May I attend the bar mitzvah?

Answer: Most of us are familiar with the prohibition of maris ayin, avoiding doing something that may raise suspicion that one violated halacha. However, most of us are uncertain when this rule applies, and when it does not.

Here are some examples of maris ayin mentioned by the Mishnah and Gemara:

A. One may not hang out wet clothes on Shabbos because neighbors might think that he washed them on Shabbos.<sup>1</sup> This is true even when all the neighbors realize that he is a meticulously observant individual.

B. Officials who entered the Beis HaMikdash treasury did so barefoot and wearing garments that contained no hemmed parts or wide sleeves, and certainly no pockets or cuffs, so that it would be impossible for them to hide any coins.<sup>2</sup> The Mishnah states that this practice is derived from the pasuk vihiyem nekiyim meiHashem umiyisroel,<sup>3</sup> --- Do things in a way that is as obviously clean in the eyes of people as it is viewed by Hashem. Rav Moshe Feinstein contends that some types of maris ayin are prohibited min haTorah!<sup>4</sup>

C. Tzedakah collectors should get other people to convert their currency for them and not convert it themselves, because people might think that they gave themselves a more favorable exchange rate.<sup>5</sup>

### A Curious Contradiction

The concept of it being a mitzvah to avoid a situation of maris ayin is a fascinating curiosity, because it contradicts another important Torah mitzvah – to judge people favorably. This mitzvah requires us to judge a Torah Jew favorably when we see him act in a questionable way.<sup>6</sup> If everyone were to judge others favorably at all times, there would never be a reason for the law of maris ayin. Yet we see that the Torah is concerned that someone might judge a person unfavorably and suspect him of violating a mitzvah.

Indeed, a person's actions must be above suspicion; at the same time, people observing him act in a suspicious way are required to judge him favorably.

### Entering a Treif Restaurant

May I enter a non-kosher restaurant to use the bathroom, to eat a permitted item, or to attend a professional meeting?

A prominent rav once gleaned insight on this shaylah from early poskim, who discussed the kashrus issues of Jewish travelers. In the sixteenth century, there was a dispute between the Rama and the Maharshah whether a Jewish traveler may eat herring and pickles prepared and served in non-kosher inns.<sup>7</sup> The Rama ruled that, under the circumstances, a traveler could eat these items on the inn's non-kosher plates, whereas the Maharshah prohibited using the inn's plates. However, neither sage prohibited either eating or entering the inn because of maris ayin; from this, the rav inferred that entering a non-kosher eating establishment does not violate maris ayin.

However, Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that entering a non-kosher eatery is a violation of maris ayin.<sup>8</sup> Why does he not compare this law to the inn of the earlier poskim?

The answer is that in the sixteenth century, the inn functioned as a place of shelter and lodging, not only as a place providing food. Therefore, someone seeing you enter the inn would have assumed that you were looking for a place to sleep, and that you had no intention of eating non-kosher food there. Thus, the sixteenth-century inn is comparable to a twenty-first century hotel that contains non-kosher restaurants. There is certainly no maris ayin prohibition to visit a hotel, since a passerby would assume that you are entering the hotel for reasons other than eating non-kosher food. However, the primary reason people enter a non-kosher restaurant is to eat treif food. Therefore, Rav Moshe rules that it is prohibited to enter a treif restaurant because of maris ayin.

### Likely? Or almost likely?

This leads us to a practical question. May one do something that could be interpreted in different ways, one of which involves violating the Torah and the other not? Is this activity prohibited because of maris ayin? For example, someone hanging up wet clothes on Shabbos may have just washed them, or he may have just accidentally dropped them into a basin of water or used them to mop up a spill. Yet the halacha is that this is prohibited because of maris ayin. This implies that since the most common reason for hanging out clothes is that they were recently washed, the activity is prohibited because of maris ayin.

Similarly, there are many reasons why one might enter a treif restaurant: to attend a meeting, to use the comfort facilities, or to drink a cup of water. On the other hand, the most common reason people enter a non-kosher restaurant is to eat non-kosher food. This is why Rav Moshe prohibits entering a treif restaurant.

However, Rav Moshe rules that under highly extenuating circumstances, such as when one is famished and there is nowhere else to eat, one may enter a treif restaurant. This is based on another principle of Chazal that when one suffers a great deal, one may override a rabbinic prohibition to alleviate the pain.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, Rav Moshe permits someone who is famished to eat kosher food in a non-kosher restaurant. Based on his

ruling, one could presumably permit entering a treif restaurant to use the restroom, if it is the only one readily available.

#### The Company Cafeteria

Many workplaces provide a cafeteria where one can purchase (non-kosher) food or bring in one's own food. Alternatively, some cafeterias have packaged kosher food available. In either of these situations, there is no concern for maris ayin, since people enter the cafeteria to eat kosher food also.

#### May I Attend a Meeting where they will serve Non-Kosher food?

Rabbonim rule differently on this issue; therefore, one should ask a shaylah of his own rav. Personally, I believe that the answer depends on how secure one is at one's employment. If you feel that skipping the meeting might jeopardize your employment, then you may attend, since losing your job entails a great amount of suffering. However, if you feel that it will not jeopardize your employment, you may not attend.

#### Are there new Maris Ayin cases?

If a situation exists that could be a case of maris ayin, but is not mentioned by Chazal, is it prohibited because of maris ayin? There is actually an early dispute about this question, between the Rashba and the Pri Chodosh. A little explanation is necessary before we present this case: Chazal prohibited placing fish blood, which is perfectly kosher, in a serving bowl since someone might confuse it with animal blood.<sup>10</sup> Based on this Gemara, the Rashba prohibited cooking meat in human milk, even though human milk is halachically pareve.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the Rama prohibits cooking meat in "almond milk" -- a white, milk-like liquid made from almonds that probably looked similar to our non-dairy creamer or soy milk -- because of its similar appearance to cow's milk. One may cook meat in almond milk and serve it only if one leaves pieces of almond in the "milk" to call attention to its non-dairy origin.<sup>12</sup> The Pri Chadash disagrees with the Rama, contending that we should not create our own cases of maris ayin and one should prohibit only those items that were prohibited by Chazal.<sup>13</sup> The consensus of poskim is to prohibit these new maris ayin cases, following the position of Rashba and Rama.

Based on this ruling, some contemporary authorities contend that one should not serve pareve, non-dairy creamer after a fleishig meal, since someone might think that something milchig is being served after a fleishig meal. They permit serving the "creamer" in the original container that clearly identifies it as a pareve product, similar to serving the meat cooked with almond milk, provided there are some almonds in the "milk."

However, other poskim contend that today no maris ayin issue exists germane to these products, since the average person knows about the ready availability of pareve creamers, cheeses, ice creams, margarines, soy and rice milk, and the like.<sup>14</sup>

This leads us to a new discussion --

#### Maybe this is no longer Maris Ayin?

If something was prohibited as maris ayin in earlier generations, does it become permitted if there is no longer a maris ayin issue? Can we prove that the prohibition against maris ayin disappears if the issue is no longer a concern? Is it correct that although, at one time, one could not cook meat in almond milk, today one may cook meat in soy milk, since pareve milk substitutes are readily available? Similarly, may one serve margarine at a fleishig meal?

We can gather proof for answering this shaylah from the following case:

One may not hire a gentile to perform work on Shabbos that a Jew may not do. However, a non-Jew may operate his own business on Shabbos, even if he rents his facility from a Jew.

The Gemara rules that a Jew may rent his field to a non-Jewish sharecropper, since the gentile is not his employee. However, a Jew may not rent his bathhouse to a gentile, since the non-Jew may operate the bathhouse on Shabbos.<sup>15</sup>

How is a Bathhouse different from a Field?

Why may I rent the non-Jew my field, but not my bathhouse? What is the difference between the two?

At the time of the Gemara, it was common to rent fields, and thus someone seeing a gentile work a Jewish-owned field on Shabbos would assume that the gentile rented it. He would not think that the Jew hired the gentile to work for him, which would constitute a violation of the laws of Shabbos.

However in antiquity, it was uncommon to rent out a bathhouse. The person who owned the bathhouse hired employees to operate the business for him. Therefore, someone seeing a gentile operate a Jewish-owned bathhouse on Shabbos might assume that the Jew hired gentiles to operate his bathhouse on Shabbos, which violates halacha. Because of this, Chazal prohibited renting a bathhouse to a gentile, because it would result in maris ayin when people see the gentile operating the Jew's bathhouse on Shabbos.<sup>16</sup>

Shulchan Aruch<sup>17</sup> rules that if it is common in a certain city for people to rent out their bathhouses, one may rent one's bathhouse to a gentile, despite the Gemara's ruling. There is no maris ayin, since people in this city will assume that the gentile rented the bathhouse from its owner. Thus, the maris ayin prohibition of the Gemara is rescinded in places and times when the concern of suspicion no longer exists. Similarly, we can conclude that nowadays, someone seeing non-dairy creamer served at a fleishig meal will assume that it is a pareve milk substitute, and that there is no issue of maris ayin.

Question # 3: Hyman Goldman would like to retire and sell his business, Hymie Goldman's Bakery, to a non-Jew, who will keep the business open on Shabbos. Must he require the non-Jew to change the name of the shop?

First, some background to this shaylah.

Rama permits renting a business that people do not associate with a Jewish owner to a gentile.<sup>18</sup> Thus, a Jew may buy the regional franchise of a non-Jewish company and rent or franchise out the individual stores to gentiles. Acharonim dispute whether he may do this even where the Jew is sometimes involved in the management of the stores.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, a Jew who owns a shopping mall may rent the stores to gentiles, since people assume that each business is owned individually. However, if the rent includes a percentage of sales, he might thereby be receiving sechar Shabbos, profits from work performed on Shabbos. One should ask a shaylah, since the halacha in this case depends on the specific circumstances involved.

However, although a Jew may rent his facility to a gentile tenant, it is unclear whether he may sell the business to a gentile who will keep the Jew's name on the business and have it open on Shabbos. Even if passersby realize that there are now exclusively non-Jews staffing Hymie's, they may think that Hyman still owns the shop and is hiring gentiles to operate the business for him. I discussed this shaylah with several different rabbonim and received different answers.

Here is another interesting maris ayin shaylah:

"I will be working in a town with very few observant people. There is an observant woman in town who lives alone, who will be away the entire time I am there. She is very willing to let me use her house while she is away. Is there a problem that people may not realize that she is away, and they might think that we are violating the prohibition of yichud - being secluded with someone of the other gender to whom one is not closely related?"

Rav Moshe Feinstein discusses this almost identical shaylah. Someone wants to sleep and eat at a widow's house when she is out of town. Is there a concern of maris ayin, because people will think that he is staying at her house when she is home, and that they are violating the prohibition of yichud? Rav Moshe rules that it is permitted, reasoning that since there are many ways to avoid yichud, we need not assume that people will think that he is violating the halacha.<sup>20</sup>

This is not Maris Ayin

Rav Moshe Feinstein notes that maris ayin does not include doing something permitted that people might mistakenly think is forbidden.

Maris ayin means that someone thinks I violated something – he thinks that I misappropriated someone else’s money, washed clothes on Shabbos, ate something non-kosher, etc. However, it does not include doing something permitted that people might mistakenly think is forbidden.

Thus, Rav Moshe discusses whether there is any prohibition in traveling a short distance by car on Friday evening after candle lighting time, when you will certainly not come to desecration of Shabbos. He rules that one may do this, since there is no prohibition against doing work after candle lighting time, even if ignorant people think that there is.

Question # 4: My not-yet-observant cousin is making a bar mitzvah in a Reform temple. We have a good relationship, and he is very curious about exploring authentic Judaism. May I attend the bar mitzvah?

Rav Moshe rules that one may not enter a reform temple at the time people are praying there, because someone might think one prayed there, which is prohibited according to halacha. Alternatively, someone might erroneously learn from this person’s example that it is permitted to pray with them. Someone faced with the above predicament should discuss the issue with his rav, how to develop the relationship with his cousin, without entangling himself in any halachic issues.

Conclusion:

By examining the parameters of maris ayin, we become aware of the importance of the impression that our actions make. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking that it does not matter what others think of us. Our behavior must not only be correct, but also appear correct. In general, our lives should be a model of appropriate behavior and kiddush Hashem. Let others look at us and say, “He is a frum Jew - he lives his life on a higher plane of honesty, of dignity, and of caring for others.” -- As Chazal say in Pirkei Avos: “Kol she’ruach habrios nocha heimenu ruach hamakom nocha heimenu.” One who is pleasing to his fellowman is pleasing to his Creator.

- 1 Mishnah and Gemara Shabbos 146b
- 2 Shekalim 3:2
- 3 Bamidbar 32:22
- 4 Shu’t Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 4:82
- 5 Bava Basra 8b; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 257:2
- 6 For further information on the mitzvah of judging people favorably, see Shaarei Teshuvah of Rabbeinu Yonah, 3:218.
- 7 Yam shel Shelomoh, Chullin 8:44; quoted by Taz, Yoreh Deah 91:2
- 8 Shu’t Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 2:40
- 9 see Kesubos 60a
- 10 Kereisos 21b
- 11 Shu’t HaRashba 3:257

- 12 Rama, Yoreh Deah 87:3
- 13 Yoreh Deah 87:6
- 14 Shu’t Yechaveh Daas 3:59
- 15 Mishnah Avodah Zarah 21a
- 16 Avodah Zarah 21b
- 17 Orach Chayim 243:2
- 18 243:2
- 19 see Mishnah Berurah 243:14
- 20 Shu’t Igros Moshe, Even HaEzer 3:19

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**TALMUDIGEST :: Bechorot 37 - 43**

**For the week ending 17 December 2011 / 20 Kislev 5772**

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**by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

**FLAWLESS COMPARISONS - Bechorot43a**

A moom – a physical flaw – disqualifies an animal from serving as a sacrifice and a kohen from performing the sacrificial service.

In three different places the Torah spells out the need for flawlessness.

The disqualification of a bechor (firstborn male animal) for sacrificial purposes is mentioned in Devarim 15:21. For other sacrifices the source is Vayikra 22:21-24 and for kohanim it is Vayikra 21:16-24.

Why was it necessary for the Torah to spell out the concept of disqualification in regard to all three rather than just mention it by one and learn the others from it?

The answer given by the gemara is that each of the three categories has a unique feature which would not be comparable to others.

If only the disqualification of kohanim was mentioned, we might have assumed that this is because they are obligated in mitzvot and must therefore be flawless in order to perform service.

From the disqualification of animals for sacrifice it would have been impossible to extend the concept to kohanim because the animal itself serves as the sacrifice.

And finally we could not learn about the disqualification of kohanim or even regular sacrifices from the need for flawlessness in the bechor because the firstborn is considered sacred upon birth and fit for sacrifice.

**WHAT THE SAGES SAY**

“Any chapter in the Torah which is repeated was repeated in order to introduce something new.”

The Yeshiva of Rabbi Yishmael - Bechorot 43a

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Please address all comments and requests to [Hamelaket@Gmail.com](mailto:Hamelaket@Gmail.com)