



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Shelach Lecha Year 25 by Dayan Abraham David

The Parasha speaks extensively about the sin of the meraglim, spies, who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan and who came back with a bad report convincing the Bnei Yisrael to abandon their entry into the Promised Land. Hashem threatened to destroy them completely for this and to make Moshe into a great nation. Moshe prayed on their behalf asking for 'Erech Apayim', to delay their destruction and was able to save their immediate demise, but they would die in the desert and only their children would enter the Promised Land. With the chet haegel, the sin of the golden calf, Moshe was able to achieve more. He prayed for forgiveness for them and was granted this as it says 'Vayinachem Hashem al Hara'ah asher diber laasot lamo', and G-d repented from the bad he wanted to do to his people and was able to bring them the second luchot habrit. We need to understand why the chet hameraglim was so much worse

than the egel which was in fact avodah zarah, idolatry. We could say that by the egel there was no rebellion against Moshe their teacher of Torah and leader as we see they abandoned the golden calf when Moshe returned and followed him thus he was able to destroy it and brought them back to teshubah shelema. Further a Jew cannot really believe in avodah zarah and will soon see through its falsehood, it was a temporary lapse. In fact it was called a '*chataah*' a shogeg, an unwitting sin. They soon came back to themselves. But with the sin of the spies the whole congregation rebelled against Moshe their teacher and leader and set about appointing a leadership to take them back to Egypt as the pasuk says '*nitena rosh veNashuba mitzraimah*'. Even worse they turned their backs on their forefathers, they abandoned the yearnings of Abraham, Yitzhak and Yaacov for the Promised Land and they had cut off their connection with the Avot. Cutting themselves off from their teacher of Torah and the ways of the Avot they became like a ship without a rudder in a storm, emptied of any hope or aspiration, not even feeling they had

transgressed a great sin hence far from teshubah. Moshe felt he could not pray for forgiveness only to delay the punishment, prevent their immediate demise and to save their children that is why he only prayed for Erech Apayim, to avoid Chillul Hashem. He did not mention rahamim or zechut avot for they had turned their backs on their teacher of Torah and their patriarchs. As long as we are led by our leaders of Torah and keep connected to our forefathers, Abraham Yitzhak and Yaacov and cherish their ways then we are close to salvation even if we err somewhat.

GEMS

This parasha ends with the mitzvot of Tzitzit which has a special 'segula', quality, of reminding us of all the mitzvot we are commanded. 'Vur- Etem oto vuz-Kartem et kol mitzvoth Hashem va-Asetem otam', you should see them [the threads of the tzitzit] and be reminded of all the mitzvot and you will fulfil them. How we are reminded seems to be an argument between Rashi and the Ramban. Rashi reckons that the word Tzitzit has the 'gematriah', numerical value, of 600 plus the 8 threads and the 5 knots making the 613 mitzvot of the Torah. The Ramban explains it was the blue 'Techelet', which is sourced from the world. 'Kollel', all-inclusive, 'hakol', and of course the colour itself which is similar to the sea, the heavens and the Throne of G-d. But in whatever way we see the indication, that is not the be-all of how it works. For, according to Rashi, it does not add up since the word Tzitzit

is spelt with one *yud* in the Torah not two so we have to reckon on how it is read to make the count work. Alternatively, we can include the *Lamed* (value 30) in *leTzitzit* and share that value among the 3 mentions of the word Tzitzit to make up for the missing *yud* in each mention. Quite a complicated reckoning! The other problem with the Ramban's explanation is that nowadays we do not have the blue of the *Chalazon* and we use only white to fulfil the mitzva. So how do we have the indication? We have to say that we must still think of the colour blue without seeing it. All these are indicators to help us to connect our thoughts to the power of this mitzva. But this Mitzva has an intrinsic ability to remind us of all the mitzvot just by seeing the threads of the Tzitzit on our four-cornered garments like a *chok*. Our Rabbis teach us that seeing the *Techelet* of the Tzitzit dyed from the *Chalazon* will remind us of the sea and the sea will remind us of the heavens and the heavens of the colour of the stone supporting the Throne of Hashem and connect us to Him. Why do we have to go in such an indirect way? Why not, just connect the blue of the Tzitzit directly to the '*Kiseh HaKavod*', the blue of the stone supporting the Throne of Hashem? Maybe we could say that this is a process to enhance our connection with Hashem. We must first connect the blue of the thread to the blue of the sea for the *Chalazon* is also from the sea. With that we are awed by the vastness and power of the sea which reflects the blue of the sky and the heavens. We then think of the heavens and are even more awed by what the heavens

contain, the greatness of the entire universe, and above all the blue stone of the Throne of Hashem. Only after taking all this in our thoughts can we then appreciate the greatness of Hashem whom we serve through the mitzvot.

This mitzva has the power to counteract the urges and wanderings of our heart and our eyes, *'VeLo taturu achre leBabchem veAchare enechem'*, which leads us to *'Averot'*, sin. The pasuk mentions the heart first and then the eyes. The Midrash Tanchuma which Rashi quotes mentions, *'Ha-ayin roeh veHaLev chomed veHaGuf oseh haAverot'*, the eyes see, then the heart urges, *chomed*, and demands and the body does the sin which seems to be the reverse of the pasuk. Which puts the heart first, with the eyes that follow. We could explain that really it begins with the heart. For the heart when left to its own devices has its yearnings and uses the eyes to seek out the objects of its yearnings and focuses on them and when the picture is in focus the heart goes into action willing it until the the body follows with the *'avera'*, sin. The Ibn Ezra seems to explain it in this way: *'Achare leBabchem haMetave, vahaAyin Roeh vahaLev chomed'*, after your heart urges your eyes to see then the heart demands what the eyes see. Our eyes pick out what our heart wants to see and then our heart focuses on what we see and demands its will. If our hearts are left empty without thoughts of Torah and mitzvot then inevitably this happens. Nowadays, the problem is more compounded. For our eyes are bombarded with the most lewd and disgusting sights, unheard of in

previous generations, creating *taavot* in our hearts. As mentioned in the previous parasha, *'VeAsafsuf asher beKirbo hiTavu Taavah veYashuvu veYibku gam bene Yisrael'*. The *'erev rav'*, the strangers in our midst created a new *tavah*, a new lust, and the bene Yisrael followed and cried for it. We must now be guarded from what we see in the first place as well.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

It was a Friday during the Gulf War when The Rishon Le Zion Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu *a"uyb* received a telephone call from a very distraught lady. She explained to him that she was in the middle of divorce proceedings and in the meantime the Dayan concerned with the case had given temporary custody of the children to the father. She was concerned that perhaps the father would not take enough care of the children, with the gas masks and the secure of the room etc during an anticipated scud attack. She wanted the Chief Rabbi to intervene to have the children in her keeping at least for this period. She had already tried to contact the Dayan concerned but he could not be reached. She pleaded for help. The Rabbi informed her that he could not interfere in the pasak of the Beth Din but advised her to spend the Shabbat with her children and her husband. She was ashamed to make such a suggestion but the Rabbi gently urged her to explain to her husband it was only because of her worry for the safety of the children. She did so and spent the

Shabbat with her husband and the children. On Motzei Shabbat the Rabbi received a call from her to tell him she would be staying on, as they had sorted out many of their differences.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

Birchat Hamazon which could be a positive Mitzvah from the Torah has many Halachot which people might be unaware of; we will mention some of these:

- 1) The four Berachot in Birkat Hamazon must not be interrupted by speech even to answer Kadish, Kedusha or Barechu. This is even stricter than Kriat Shema when we may interrupt for fear and Kavod. Berchat Hamzon is like saying the Amida.
- 2) Unlike the Amida we sit down for Birkat Hamazon so that we should have more '*kavanah*', concentration. We should not stand up or walk about unless we are on a journey and afraid to be left behind, then as we eat while walking we say Birkat Hamazon as well while walking, this is permitted to help us concentrate on our Berachot and not be disturbed out of fear of being left behind.
- 3) Some say we should sit down even for '*Me-ein shalosh;*' '*al ha mechiya*' and '*al haperot*'

etc. It is praiseworthy to sit for all the Berachot we make.

- 4) We are not allowed to do any work while saying Birkat Hamazon, even that which is light work as we may not in Tefillah - we should not be drying our hands, or putting on a jacket, or clearing crumbs on the table, or fanning ourselves with a hand fan to keep cool, or indicating to attract attention, or to pass a message.
- 5) We should hear ourselves when saying the Birkat Hamazon even though Maran says we are '*yotze bedieved*' but others argue hence we should not get ourselves into a '*sofek*' which means doubt.

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences 9:06 pm

We should not light candles before 7:37 pm

Shabbat terminates 10:38 pm

Shabbat :Latest Shema

Magen Avraham 8:16 am

Shabbat Latest Shema Gra 8:52 am

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE
GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS
CONCERNING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**
**VUSHMARTEM MEOD
LE'NAFSHOTECHEM**

VEAHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA