



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

New Service

To reduce administrative overheads and increase communications we are offering members the option to receive all Shul mailings via email. To opt into this service (which is separate from the newsletter email list), please email office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk with your name and preferred email address.. Once you opt in you won't receive mailings in the post unless you advise accordingly in the future.

Early Minyan Restarts This Week

The early Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos restarts this week, with the option of a 6.55pm or 7.30pm Mincha.

THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Doctors and Pilots

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

Seeing is believing. Most of us are natural skeptics, and it is difficult to convince us of something we have not seen with our own eyes. And even then, we are apt to have lingering doubts. Indeed, we take pride in our skepticism, because we know it protects us from all sorts of fraud and deception. We are nobody's fools.

In this week's portion, however, the Torah goes directly against this tendency. The Torah exhorts us not to deviate one whit from the words of our Sages, neither to the right nor to the left. What does this mean? The Talmud explains that even if they tell us that our right hand is our left and our left is our right we are to follow them with implicit faith. Of course, our Sages would obviously never tell us something that is patently ridiculous. Rather, the left and right hands are a metaphor for something that is seemingly erroneous according to our perceptions. Nonetheless, we are required to follow their lead rather than our own judgment. The Torah demands that we have faith.

How do we understand this requirement to have faith? Why does the Torah demand of us to go against our natural instincts? Why should we follow blindly rather than take a stand as independent thinkers and demand explanations?

If we pause to consider, however, we will discover that faith forms an integral part of our everyday lives. In fact, without faith we would be practically immobilized. When we get into our cars, we do not worry that our brakes may be defective and will suddenly fail when we are traveling at high speeds. Why? Because we have faith in the manufacturers. When we get on a plane we do not worry that the pilot is incompetent or drunk. Why? Because we have faith in the pilot. When we go to doctors, we generally accept what they tell us. Why? Because we have faith in our doctors.

Without faith, we would be afraid to switch on the lights or put food into our mouths or believe a word anyone tells us. Clearly, Hashem created us with the innate ability to have faith. Why then, if we so easily have faith in our doctors and pilots, do we find it so difficult to have faith in Hashem even when we believe in His existence? Why do we find it so

hard to accept all His deeds and commands without question?

The answer lies in our egotism. Doctors and pilots are there to serve us. Accepting them on good faith may result in physical restrictions, but it does not require us to surrender our personal independence in any way. We are still in control of our destinies. They advise. We make the decisions. Such faith comes easily.

Faith in Hashem is an altogether different matter. If we forfeit the right to question His deeds and commands, we acknowledge that we are subservient to Him. We surrender our independence, and that is a very difficult thing to do. But still, we must. For if we believe in Hashem yet refuse to give Him our faith and trust, we would be living a lie.

Therefore, the Torah exhorts us again and again to have faith in Hashem, to overcome the stiff, illogical resistance of egotism and submit to His higher intelligence. Certainly, He is at least as deserving of our good faith as our doctors and pilots.

After attending the yeshiva of a great sage for a number of years, a young student suddenly declared himself an atheist and announced that he was leaving. Naturally, this came as great shock to the other students and the faculty, and they begged him to consult the sage before he left.

The sage nodded gravely as he listened to the young man.

"I agree that if you are an atheist this is not the place for you," he said. "But tell me, what made you become an atheist?"

"It is because I have lost my faith," the young man replied.

"Indeed? And why did you lose your faith?"

"Because I have questions."

The sage smiled sadly. "No, my young friend, you do not have questions. You have answers. You have decided that you want to live a certain lifestyle, and in order to do so you have to be an atheist. Now that you've come up with this answer, you have found questions to support your foregone conclusion."

In our own lives, we experience the egotistical resistance to faith in our

The Week Ahead

פרשת שופטים

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.55 / 7.30pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 7.15 / 7.55 - 7.40
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.26am
Mincha 1st Minyan	6.00pm
Mincha 2nd Minyan	8.41pm
Followed by the Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	
Motzei Shabbos	9.46pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	6.45 / 7.30pm

children, who find it hard to admit that their parents may be right but would willingly accept the same statements from others. The difference is simple. When we acknowledge the wisdom of parents, we pay a high price in personal independence. Similarly, we pay a high price when we acknowledge the awesome might and wisdom of the Master of the Universe. But if we overcome our stubborn egotism and acknowledge the obvious truth, we will find that the rewards of faith are well worth the price we pay for them.

Melech: The King and I

Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene (Torah.org)

The Mitzvah:

Once the Jewish people entered the Holy Land there was the mitzvah of appointing a Melech, king. Chosen from among his brethren, the Jewish monarch was to be accorded the utmost respect by his subjects and any rebellion against him was punishable by death. He himself was subject to several specific laws such as writing an additional Torah scroll, and prohibited from amassing an excessive amount of wives, of gold and horses (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

What lies behind the figurehead of a king? And what is to be the relationship between a Jewish sovereign and that of his subjects the Jewish people?

A king summons up the concept of “fear”. The personification of authority, his word is the law of the land: *Dina d’malchusa dina*, the law of the kingdom is the law [to be upheld] (Gittin 10b). The king is unyielding. His honor – accorded by the position not his personality – cannot be waived or compromised. “If a king renounced his honor, his honor is not renounced” (Kesuvos 17a). Insubordination towards the monarch, of any kind, is not tolerated.

His importance can be understood based on the principle that there is always a parallel between the spiritual and physical worlds. Here, the concept of human kingship is a metaphor to the Kingship of G-d. “The royalty on earth reflects the royalty of Heaven” (Berachos 58a).

In general, the underlying relationship between G-d and this world is as its All-Powerful Ruler; he is *melech malchei hamelachim*, “the King of all kings”. But to the chosen nation, He is also a Father who typically displays “love and compassion” onto his children. Therefore, in their prayers, the Jewish people incorporate both aspects of their divine worship. They view G-d as *Ovinu Malkeinu*, “Our Father and Our King”.

In the Jewish nation’s divine worship, the first step is obedience “out of fear”. He does not want to flaunt any one of the King’s 613 commandments dreading the possible consequences. This corresponds to *yiras Hashem*, divine reverence. Fear of punishment and retribution from the mighty king, albeit the category of *sheloy lishma*, “not for the sake of His Name” is nevertheless the springboard through which to progress onto the higher dimension – namely that of serving G-d *lishma*, “for the sake of His Name”. This elevated category bespeaks *ahavas Hashem*, serving G-d “out of love”.

The respect, awe and authority of a human king were the means to instill fear into his subjects. All his grandeur, affluence and influence cannot be for his self-glorification. Rather, it was as a means to come onto fear of G-d, the King of all kings.

A Jewish king had to constantly focus on his mission. His destiny requires that he impose his stamp and mark upon his people. The anointed leader of his people, he was divinely entrusted to supervise his subjects and to faithfully live by the dictates of the Torah. That a Torah scroll always accompanies the king, acts as a constant and powerful reminder how both he and his subjects are inextricably bound to the laws of G-d. The king was similarly instructed not to pursue wealth, women and military strength because this would distract him from his role.

It would have been ideal had the Jewish people risen to the higher level of *ahavas Hashem*, serving G-d out of love without ever requiring the presence of a human king to impose and implement the concept of *yiras Hashem*, “divine service out of fear”. This explains why this mitzvah is seemingly phrased as “optional” rather than obligatory. Only if the people ask for a monarch, something which they historically requested in the time of the prophet Shmuel, should the necessary steps be taken. The king is there because he is the one who is entrusted to redirect all

the fear he garners from his subjects onto the King of kings. The Jewish sovereign is the Torah leader of his people constantly concerned for their physical and spiritual welfare. In this respect, Jewish rabbinic leaders are similarly described as royalty (Gittin 62a).

The Jewish nation anxiously waits for the day when G-d will be universally heralded as Master of the Universe and crowned King by the entire world.

That Prescient Moment of Pause... Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

Judges and officers you should place for yourself in all your gates... (Devarim 17:18)

On the most basic level we learn here of the practical importance of each community setting up courts of law and a system of enforcement. Something else, closer to home, may be implied here, though. We see a similar expression is used for the commandment to place a mezuzah – a mini-Torah Scroll, “on the door posts of your house and upon “your gates”. Conceptually linked, these two verses may yield together a potent point of equal practicality.

Eleven years ago we were spending Shabbos at the house of a truly great person. The Rabbi asked my oldest who was in first grade at the time son what he was learning in school. Moments later they were sitting together with open books. It was fascinating to see people on two different levels confronting the same text.

When they got to the place where the verse states, (Breishis 4:7) “Sin squats at the door...” my son translated and the Rebbe asked him, “Which door?” My son responded innocently, “I don’t know!” The Rebbe then said something that struck me as amazing. He said, “Any door, any opening where he can enter!”

There are many avenues of access for destructive forces to enter a person’s life. We have five senses and many memories too. They often work in tandem to upset our equilibrium. All it takes is a smell or the music of a passing car and we are someplace we would rather not be. Sometimes the opening is a moment of weakness, being tired or even overly exuberant. Occasionally the chink in the armor is exposed during times of transition. We are traveling, changing jobs, in foreign territory, coming home from work, doing nothing. Any of these are potentially moments of vulnerability.

A “gate”, that place where mezuzah goes, is a port of transit as we move from one domain to another. We are about to enter our house. There’s a need to pause and contemplate seriously just as if we were crossing the border into a foreign country. What challenges lie within? What hazards lurk there? What is the language, the currency of this place? What strategies, what disciplines do I need to succeed, to survive? It is there that we confront that mini-Torah scroll – the mezuzah. Amongst other things it reminds us of the requirement – “Judges and officers you should place for yourself in all your gates...”

We need a judge, that is good judgment, objective assessments before entering a new scene. A good doctor won’t come to an operation without having examined the charts first, a teacher dare not enter the classroom without a lesson plan, and neither would any wise businessman enter a meeting cold and unprepared. The battle is usually won in advance. To foresee is to rule or as the Talmud says, “The wise man sees consequences”. There is equally a need for discipline to carry out, to execute the plan of action. The policy should not melt into mere theory upon contact with reality.

Both farsighted wisdom and moral muscle are needed to create and police standards in advance of confronting the many critical-“gates” of life: 1) Boarding a plane 2) Waking up the computer 3) Entering the kitchen 4) Exiting school 5) Picking up a phone 6) Leaving the house 7) Reading an E-Mail 8) Meeting people 9) Closing our eyes 10) Opening our eyes 11) Turning the key of the car. 12) Tuning the radio.

At all these junctures, and more, it helps to have installed a prior principled plan and to have ready courage to carry it through. That’s what gives us a feeling of accomplishment as we navigate through the ever changing scenes of our lives.

The victory lies not the mere kissing of the mezuzah by the “gate” but in the applied art of awakening appropriate thoughts and feelings in that prescient moment of pause...