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Lirfuat Eliyahu Chaim Ben Rivka Betoch Shaar Cholei Yisrael

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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PARASHA INSIGHTS

A school teacher asked a student, "John, will you please conjugate the verb 'to go' for the class?" The kid began, "I go... um... you go... ehmm... he goes..." "How about a little faster?" asks the teacher.

"Sure!" answered John. "I run, you run, she runs..."

Movement is important. It's always good to be going forward.

Yet there is another type of going that's important - Going in G-d's path.

What does that mean, and how can we achieve this?

Our Parasha teaches us the importance of Going in Hashem's ways.

The Chafetz Chaim ztsl in his introduction to Ahavat Chesed, notes that there are three times within this Parsha that we are commanded to go in Hashem's Ways.

Let's have a look at the Pesukim.

1: (8:6) You shall observe the commandments of Hashem, to go in His ways and fear Him.

2: (10:12) VeAta Yisrael - And Now Israel..... to fear (Hashem)... go in all His Ways and Love Him.

3: (11:22) Ki Im Shamor - To love Hashem your G-d, to go in his ways and to attach to him.

Why does the Torah go out of its way to seemingly repeat the same command?

What does it actually mean to 'go' in Hashem's Ways?

The Chafetz Chaim explains that there are three levels in serving Hashem.

Yirah - Fear.

Ahava - Love.

Devekut - Attachment

The difference between love and attachment is that attachment represents love that is constantly fixated in the heart. Through that kind of strong love, we are able to attach ourselves to Hashem.

Love on its own, can come under pressure and only show itself at certain times. With Dvekut (attachment) love exists constantly in the heart.

The Torah stresses these three Pesukim in order to teach us the secret of gaining the final and top level - Devekut.

First we are to start to work on ourselves to imitate Hashem's Ways.

Just as He is merciful, we should be merciful to others. Just as He is kind hearted and has provided us with abundance, so to should we be with others.

We are to 'go' in His ways, by imitating His Midot (Characteristics).

The Torah teaches us that in order to go up a level in spirituality, we first need to concentrate on our character with others.

Thus the Torah states in the first Pasuk above - first go in his ways, only then can you reach fear of G-d.

What happens once we have reached that level of Yirah (fear of G-d) - is it all spiritual concentration from here on?

No, says the Chafetz Chaim. The Torah in the 2nd Pasuk states - on your way up the spiritual ladder from Yirah to Ahava - again you must 'go' in Hashem's Ways, by improving on your social and caring character traits. Hence the Torah places 'go' in His Ways, between the words Yirah and Ahava.

And once you have reached the second level and are on your way to the final level, can you then only concentrate on spirituality?

No! The final Pasuk states, between Ahava and Devekut, again we need to work on our social and caring character traits to imitate Hashem.

What a powerful lesson!

No matter how high we are heading spiritually, we must always imitate the Ways of Hashem and look around us. Especially concentrating on those commandments that we were given Ben Adam Lechavero. Only through concentrating on giving to others, are we able to advance in our connection with Hashem. ▶

” **THE WEEKLY QUOTE**
“Where hope grows miracles blossom”

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Parasha Insights

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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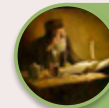


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This brings new meaning to the famous comment of our Sages Derech Erets Kadma LaTorah. If we are to improve on our standing in front of Hashem we must concentrate on our standing with fellow human beings.

The sages throughout the generations have concentrated and worked hard on themselves to support every fellow Jew.

There is a famous story of a student who had been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. He came to his Rabbi, the Chafetz Chaim, for a Beracha, blessing. According to the medical authorities, there was no cure for his ailment. The Chafetz Chaim listened carefully to the broken-hearted young man and told him that he would advise him, provided that he never reveal the advice to anyone. The student immediately agreed. The Chafetz Chaim then instructed the student to go to a certain Torah scholar in a small village to ask for his blessing. "He will give you a Beracha and you will recover," said the Chafetz Chaim. The young man, followed his Rabbi's advice, and received the blessing. In a short while, he recovered. He eventually married and raised a family, all the while never revealing to anyone the events surrounding his illness and miraculous recovery.

Twenty years later, this man's sister-in-law became ill with an illness similar to the one sustained by him many years earlier. He kept his word to the Chafetz Chaim and revealed nothing about his recovery. His wife, however, remembered that he had once spoken about a mysterious illness that had afflicted him many years before they had met. When she questioned him about it, he suddenly became evasive and quiet. The more vague he tried to be, the more she pressed on, demanding an answer that might save her sister's life.

He could take it no longer; both his wife and sister-in-law pleaded with him to reveal what had occurred many years earlier and how he had been cured. He tried to keep the secret, but to no avail. He finally gave in, rationalizing that the Chafetz Chaim did not really mean forever. He told his wife and sister-in-law about his visit with the Chafetz Chaim and his instruction that he go see a certain Talmid Chacham to ask for a Beracha. When they heard this, they became hopeful for a cure.

After a short while, the man himself became ill with symptoms similar to those of his previous illness. His worst fears had been realized. He had broken his word, and he

was now being punished. He decided that he could do nothing else, but go to his Rabbi.

He made the long journey to the Chafetz Chaim's home and entered his Rabbi's home to find a frail old man. After listening to his student's heart-rending pleas, the Chafetz Chaim turned to his student and said, "My son, I wish I could help you, but I am no longer physically able. When you came to me last time, I was much younger and stronger. I was then able to fast forty days on your behalf, so that you would be cured. Today, I can no longer do that."

This remarkable narrative teaches us the love and devotion a Rabbi had for his student. To fast forty days on behalf of a student indicates the overwhelming loyalty and love the Chafetz Chaim manifest for him. That is probably secondary to the Chafetz Chaim's humility in creating the ruse. Telling the Bachur to seek a Brachah from a Tsadik in order to conceal the real reason for the miraculous recovery. This is but a glimpse of the character of this outstanding Tsadik.

Want to go in G-d's path – look around, help others, smile and take the next step up in your spiritual connection to G-d. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI MENACHEM JUNIK - BEIS GAVRIEL LUBAVITCH, FEDERATION



PARASHA INSIGHTS

In this week's Torah portion Eikev the Mitzvah of putting on Tefillin is mentioned.

In Midrash Tehillim it's written:

Rabbi Eliezer said: "the Jewish people told Hashem, 'we want to learn Torah all day and night, but we don't have the time.' Hashem replied: 'Fulfil the Mitzvah of putting on Tefillin, and I will consider it as if you had laboured in Torah study day and night.'"

Clearly, the fact that our Sages say that wearing Tefillin can compensate for the inability to study Torah, shows that there is a relationship between the two Mitzvos. Furthermore, this Midrash implies that while it would be preferable to study Torah all the time, the Mitzvah of Tefillin has the power to fulfil much of what would be achieved through total devotion to Torah learning.

The question though is: How are these Mitzvos connected with each other? How can the fulfilment of the Mitzvah of Tefillin compensate a person for a lack of Torah study?

The Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch explains that the answer lies in understanding the deeper meaning of the Mitzvah of Tefillin.

According to the Talmud Hashem also 'wears' Tefillin. What does this mean? We say in Tehillim: 147 (19) "He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to Yisrael."

On this the Midrash comments: "There are those leaders who give commands to others to fulfil, but do not fulfil them themselves. However what Hashem commands others He Himself fulfils, as the verse says: He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His ordinances to the People of Israel." This means that only those laws which He keeps Himself, he imposes on His People.

So there is therefore a symbolic relationship between the Tefillin that we wear and the Tefillin "worn", as it were, by Hashem.

Each Mitzvah we do in this physical realm causes a mirror act in the spiritual realm; so putting on our Tefillin brings about the parallel act, which is described as Hashem putting on His Tefillin!

This can be understood through a passage in Gemara Brochos which asks, what is written in Hashem's Tefillin? The answer given is that the Tefillin contain the following verse from Divrei Hayamim "And who is like your people, like Yisrael, one nation on earth." Whereas our Tefillin contain the Shema, which talks about the uniqueness of Hashem. The Tefillin 'worn' by Hashem speak about our uniqueness as his people, therefore by Hashem putting on Tefillin, He elevates the status of the Jewish people.

We can now understand why the earlier verse says

"The Jewish people told Hashem, we want to devote ourselves to learning Torah," because learning Torah achieved a marvellous 'drawing down' of Divine light; in mystical terms this is referred to as the bringing down of Hashem's intellectual attributes into His emotional attributes.

But Torah study is time-consuming, which is why the Mitzvah of Tefillin is offered as a partial replacement, because our wearing Tefillin triggers a similar effect on high as Torah study.

The spiritual aspect of Tefillin is the drawing down of the essence of intellect. A child less than 13 years of age is not obligated to put on Tefillin, as he is not called a man and is considered to possess only a small aspect of intellect. Upon becoming 13 years old he becomes a man and his act of putting on Tefillin causes Hashem to 'put on Tefillin' and causes the drawing down of the intellectual attributes to take place as he now attains the capacity to be a vessel for this spiritual drawing down and transmission.

We see from here how Tefillin and the study of the Torah represent the same spiritual concept. Therefore, through fulfilling of the Mitzvah of Tefillin, Hashem will consider it as if we fully dedicated to the study of Torah.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI CHAI TAIEB LOMET

One of the great Tzaddikim of Tunis was Rabbi Hai Taieb, of blessed memory, who lived from 5504 to 5596 (1774 to 1836). He was a Gaon who knew both the revealed and the concealed matters of Torah, all while remaining humble, discreet, and modest about it.

Once, in the middle of winter, it no longer rained and so a draught ensued. The ground had cracked open with gaping fissures, and desolate fields appeared all fractured and split. The empty wells that had always quenched everyone's thirst remained dry. Each morning, people would raise their eyes to Heaven with great hope as they awaited a rain cloud rising in the western sky. It would bring water – life. The rabbis of the community remained praying, fervently reciting psalms. They concluded by proclaiming a fast in order to arouse Heavenly mercy.

In the home of Rabbi Hai Taieb, life was taking its normal course as he rose at dawn to serve his Creator. He was always quietly pondering Torah, and when the rabbis announced the fast, he was deep in his books, far removed from everything. His devoted wife also awoke at dawn, ready to serve him.

Rabbi Hai finished his ardent prayers to his Creator.

"Please prepare me a cup of coffee," he said to his wife.

Her eyes opened wide in astonishment and responded by telling her husband, "Didn't you hear the decision of the Rabbis? They proclaimed a fast so that it may rain."

"Really? I didn't know. All right then, prepare me a cup of coffee all the same. I'll be right back."

Rabbi Hai Taieb left his home, raises his eyes to Heaven and, as if he were a son addressing his father, he said to Him who holds the keys, "Master of the universe, Your children are in need of rain. I beg You, don't prevent rain from falling!"

At that moment, his non-Jewish neighbor found himself not far from Rabbi Hai Taieb's home when he suddenly heard him speaking to G-d!

He was still feeling surprised when suddenly the sky darkened and a torrential rain began to fall.

Frightened by the commotion caused by the rain and the thunder, the Rebbetzin said to her husband, "The world is liable to get destroyed by such a deluge!"

Rabbi Hai came back to the front door and implored, "G-d Alm-ghty, I beg you, send us rains of blessing."

The thunder immediately stopped and a gently pouring rain began filling the wells. The public fast was annulled and cries of joy resounded from all sides.

While Rabbi Hai Taieb was going back inside, his non-Jewish neighbor, who had just seen everything that had happened, ran in a panic to the owner of his house (the house that the neighbor was renting). Trembling with fear, he knocked at the door.

"What's happening?" the owner asked.

"I beg you, I immediately want to change houses! I can't live in the neighborhood of a man who performs such wonders! If you had heard how he had triggered all the rain with a few words! What will I do if this Jew, who is a Tzaddik, asks G-d to kill me? Have pity on me!"

The man quickly prepared his horse in order to travel to Rabbi Hai. He regretted having to separate from his extremely well paying tenant. Soon afterwards, both of them arrived at the Rav's.

"Rabbi, your neighbor says that a lion lives in your neighborhood. He's afraid that one day he'll be killed."

"G-d prevents me," Rabbi Hai replied, "from doing harm to anyone. But promise me as well that you will not wrong a Jew."

The non-Jew embraced the hand of the Tzaddik, and swore with great reverence to always respect the Jews. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

IS IT CONSIDERED PRAYING B'TZIBUR IF ONE PRAYS A DIFFERENT PRAYER THAN THE CONGREGATION

Hacham Moshe Rahamim Shayo, in his Mehkerei Eretz (v. 8 Orah Haim 41), discusses the following question: Is a person who prays a different prayer with the congregation considered to be praying with the community (tefilla b'tzibur)?

The Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayim 90:9) writes that "A person should do his best to pray in the Beit Keneset with the community." What if the person is saying a different Amida than the community? For example, what if on Rosh Hodesh, the community is praying Musaf and he is praying Shaharit (or the opposite)? Similarly, often during the summer, a person comes late to synagogue, and wishes to pray Minha while the community is praying Arvit. Is that considered to be communal prayer?

Hacham Shayo cites the rest of the passage from the Shulhan Arukh, cited above, which teaches that if a person is unable to come to synagogue, he should pray at the time at which the community prays. If the community says the Amida each morning at 9:00am, then one who prays at home should also try to say his Amida at 9:00 am. However, the Magen Avraham (17) comments that if one prays Musaf while the congregation is praying Shaharit, that is not considered to be similar to one who prays at the same time that the congregation prays.

Although one might infer from this Magen Avraham that one who prays a different Amida than the community is not considered to be praying with the community, the Mishna Berura explains that if one is actually praying Musaf in the synagogue with those who are praying Shaharit, that is indeed similar to one who prays at the same time as the community.

Hacham Shayo initially suggested, based upon this Mishna Berura that one who prays a different prayer than the community is considered to be part of the communal prayer (tefilla b'tzibur). The questioner, however, challenges Hacham Shayo and insists that while he may be considered like one who prays at the same time as the community, which is itself a higher level of prayer, his prayer is not considered to be communal prayer. Hacham Shayo accepts this argument and concludes that while not actually considered to be tefilla b'tzibur, there is a value of praying, even a different prayer, while the community is praying.

Afterwards, he cites the Slah (R. Yehezkel Landau, known as the Noda BiYehuda), in his commentary to Berachot 6a, who explains that if an individual prays in a synagogue while the tzibur is still there, even if they have concluded their prayers but they are still saying praises to God, such as Ashrei and Uva LeSion, "the prayers of the individual who prays there are heard." He writes, based upon the verse "lishmo'a el harina ve'el hatefilla" (to hear the praise and the prayer), that once God hears the praises of the community, He also hears the prayers of the individual. He concludes by adding that "this is certainly true regarding one who prays Shaharit in a synagogue why the congregation is saying Musaf."

In conclusion, we see that even one who wakes up late, or is late for prayers, should still come to synagogue and pray while the congregation is saying other prayers, as this is considered a higher level of prayer (even if it is not actually considered to be tefilla b'tzibur). ■

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STORY

IT TAKES ONE

I have so much to do. How will I ever manage?

How are you Avi?

I'm feeling swamped Chaim.

Really? Why?

I have so much to do. I don't know how I will ever manage.

Come, Avi. Let me help you. Let's make a list and tackle your projects one by one.

List? List? I already have a list. It hasn't helped me.

Let me see your list, Avi. Maybe I can help you.

Look in the Torah and you will see my list Chaim.

What are you talking about Avi?

My list is the list of mitzvot in the Torah. 613 mitzvot. So many mitzvot. So much to do. How will I ever manage to do them all?

You are feeling overwhelmed by the sheer number of mitzvot in the Torah, Avi. That's right, Chaim.

Hmmm. Let me think about this a minute. I think there is a verse in this week's Torah portion that will be very encouraging to you.

Please tell me. What is it?

Chapter eight, verse one. "All the mitzvah which I command you (singular) today, guard it in order to perform it . . ."

Aren't you making a mistake in grammar, Chaim? The verse should read, "All the mitzvot which I command to you (plural) . . ."

Very perceptive of you, Avi. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Ben Ahron, one of the classical Bible commentators, who is known to us as the "Keli Yakar", asks the same question. Why does the verse use the word mitzvah in the singular instead of the plural form? Why does the verse also use the word "you" in the singular instead of the plural form? After all, Moses was speaking to the entire Jewish nation.

Wow. I feel better already, Chaim. I asked the same question that the "Keli Yakar" asked. That means that I have my thinking cap on.

His answer will make you feel even better, Avi. He explains that the word "you" is written in the singular to teach us that one person can change the entire world.

How?

If he is making mistakes in his mitzvah observance, he need only correct those mistakes. That will exert a powerful enough influence to change the whole world.

Wow. What about the other part of the verse.

The word "mitzvah" is written in the singular to teach us that if a person does just one mitzvah properly, he will merit eternal life.

TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

❶ What must the Jewish People do to ensure that Hashem will fulfill His promise to do good for us?

❷ What were the:

a) wonders b) strong hand c) outstretched arm

That the Jewish People saw in Egypt?

❸ When a group performs a mitzvah, whose name is attached to the mitzvah?

❹ How did the Jewish People do their laundry in the midbar?

❺ How did the Jewish People obtain clothing for their growing children in the midbar?

Answer

- ❶ 7:12 - Guard even the "light" commandments.
 ❷ 7:19 - The: a) Plagues; b) Pestilence; c) Slaying of the firstborn.
 ❸ 8:1 - The person who finishes it.
 ❹ 8:4 - The ananei kavod (clouds of glory) cleaned and bleached their clothes.
 ❺ 8:4 - As their children grew, their clothing grew with them.

I never realized that Chaim.

You are right, Avi. There are many mitzvot to perform. Sometimes it can seem like an impossible task. We have to take them one at a time. However, just think about the words of the "Keli Yakar". One person can change the whole world. One mitzvah can change your whole life. It only takes one.

Chaim, thank you so much. I don't feel overwhelmed anymore. I just have to keep repeating it to myself.

Repeating what, Avi?

It only takes one.

