

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Sh'lach

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This week's issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Andrew and Marjorie Gann
in memory of Andrew's aunt, Jesse bat Yosef uMalka z"l

The Beholder and the Beheld

Idan Rakovsky

Three times in our parshah we find the power of seeing. The first appears in the beginning, when Moshe gets permission from Hashem to send *meraglim* (spies) to tour the land of Israel before the Jews will enter. Moshe commands them, "**See** the land, what it is." (Bamidbar 13:18) The *meraglim* are sent first of all to SEE the land, and by that to understand the quality and nature of it.

The second appears at the end of our parshah, in the mitzvah of tzitzit. Hashem commands us to wear tzitzit on our four-cornered garments, so that by **looking** at it we will "remember all the commandments of Hashem, and do them." (15:39) The power of the tzitzit is in its external appearance. The Talmud (Sotah 17a) explains that by looking on the blue cord, we will remember the blue sea, blue sky, and Divine throne.

The third place where we see the power of seeing is in that same verse regarding tzitzit, "Do not follow after your own heart and your own **eyes**." Here, the Torah explains that our eyes have so much power that by using them incorrectly, G-d forbid, we might sin. We should ask: what is the connection between all three references to vision?

When the *meraglim* saw what they saw, and told afterwards what they told, they were not lying. One might ask: why were they punished, if Moshe himself left open the possibility that they would see something negative?

The Eye of the Beholder

Rabbi Amnon Bazak of Yeshivat Har Etzion writes (*Nekudat Petichah*) that the sin of the *meraglim* was their un-objective perspective. The facts were clear to everyone, but their interpretation was problematic. Rav Bazak argues that this demonstrated that the power of the eye is more than seeing, it's assimilating information. The spies demonstrated a secular view which left no room for belief in G-d and Moshe.

As a counter to this sin, Hashem commanded the mitzvah of tzitzit. The role of tzitzit is to serve as a reminder, in daily life, of the commandment of Hashem who brought us out of Egypt, and of the fact that we are the nation of G-d. Tzitzit bring the person to faith in G-d, and prevent him from following his eyes and heart into bad ways. Looking on the tzitzit thus symbolizes the complete opposite of the circumstances that caused the sin of the spies.

The Eye of the Beheld

We might suggest another approach, based on Rabbi Eliezer Melamed's comments on the role of clothing in human culture. (*Peninei Halakha*, Hilchot Tzitzit) Rav Melamed argues that the garment is a form of human expression. According to the style of one's dress, others can know something about him. People can convey messages through their clothes.

According to this approach, we may suggest that the power of the eye looking upon the tzitzit is not of the person who wears the tzitzit, but rather of the

people who look at him! When we know that people are looking at us, we constantly remember who we are, what our role is, and what we are supposed to do.

The *meraglim* were the opposite. When they saw what they saw, they considered no external eye looking at them that could influence their perspective. Whatever they said, they said honestly from themselves, but only from what they saw, with no exterior judgment.

In our world where "my Truth" is a sanctified value, where people are encouraged to express their inner feelings and identity, maybe we should reconsider the importance of an external point of view - to pay attention to the eyes of others as well; and to be open to the idea that the power of the (other) eye may lead us to a different, perhaps positive, interpretation of the world.

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Summary

Note: The explanation of the chapter presented here is based on the one found in the Daat Mikra Yeshayahu, edited by Amos Hakham.

This chapter has two sections. The first one carries on the discussion from the previous chapter, where Yeshayahu discussed the coming downfall of the northern Israelite kingdom. The previous chapter employed light-related imagery, writing that those following divination and seeking advice from spirits, things forbidden by the Torah, would find themselves in darkness and distress. By contrast, this chapter begins with a description of the southern Judean kingdom. They will also experience walking in the darkness of a difficult period, but the Judean kingdom will “see a great light” of salvation. This refers to the onslaught of the Assyrian king Sancherev, who eventually will destroy the Israelite kingdom. Afterwards, G-d miraculously saves the Judean kingdom from the Assyrian army. The Judean kingdom’s joy and thanks to G-d for saving them, and their relief at being freed from the yoke of Assyrian oppression and the fear of war is then described. (9:1-4)

Yeshayahu then changes historical scope and describes the Mashiach. He will be someone who takes on the mantle of leadership and whose rule is characterized by peace. He will reinstate the kingdom of David, reuniting the two parts of the country, and his rule will be permanent. (5-6)

The second section of the chapter returns to the Israelite kingdom and explains the stages of G-d’s punishments and the sins of the people that prompt them.

The first sin is pride. Even after G-d has brought destruction to the kingdom, the people are confident that they can simply rebuild it stronger and save themselves from future punishment. They believe that replacing bricks with stones, and sycamore trunks with sturdier cedars, will save them. As a result, G-d destabilizes the Israelites’ political allies and allows their enemies to attack them from all sides. (7-12)

The second sin is moral and spiritual wickedness. The Israelites have been thoroughly corrupted. As a result, G-d deposes their leaders. This includes both the wise elders who might have

led the people properly, and the false prophets who lie to the people. Without any kind of leadership, the people become confused and disoriented. (13-18)

The final sin is violence against other Jews. The difficult situation caused by the previous two stages causes the Israelites to turn on each other, attacking and looting. Eventually this civil unrest will spill over to the Judean kingdom as well. (18-20)

Insight

The mention of Mashiach in this chapter is jarring. What is it doing here? One possibility is that Mashiach is the real end to the story that begins with the destruction of the Israelite kingdom. Clearing away that kingdom was a necessary step towards establishing the Mashiach as the ruler of a unified Israel.

This gives us insight into the worldview of the prophet. He is simultaneously juggling the direct consequences of the actions of the people around him, and their ultimate historical significance.

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It Happened in Israel: Leaving a Parent for Aliyah

Rabbi Chaim Metzger

While discussing the question of the extent of honouring one’s parents, the Talmud presents the complicated case of Rav Asi:

Rav Asi had an elderly mother. She said to him: I want jewelry, and he made jewelry for her. She said to him: I want a man whom I can marry, and he said to her: I will seek one for you. She said to him: I want a husband who is as handsome as you. Realizing his mother had become senile, and he could no longer honour his mother adequately, he put someone else in charge of her to attend to her needs, **he left her and went to Eretz Yisrael.**

Rav Asi **heard that she was following him** to Eretz Yisrael. **He came before Rabbi Yochanan and said to him: What is the halakha** with regard to **leaving Eretz Yisrael to go outside of Eretz Yisrael?** Rabbi Yochanan **said to him: It is prohibited.** Rav Asi further asked: If one is going to **greet his mother, what is the halakha?** Rabbi Yochanan **said to him: I do not know.** Rav Asi **waited a little while, and then came back to him.** Rabbi Yochanan **said to him: Asi, you are evidently determined to leave.** May **the Omnipresent return you in peace,** and he said no more.

Rav Asi **came before Rabbi Elazar,** because he did not know how to interpret Rabbi Yochanan’s statement. **He said to Rabbi Elazar: G-d forbid, perhaps he is angry with me that I wished to leave?** Rabbi Elazar **said to him: What exactly did he say to you?** Rav Asi **said to him: May the Omnipresent return you in peace.** Rabbi Elazar **said to him: If it is so that he was angry, he would not have blessed you.** Rabbi Yochanan certainly gave you permission to leave. **In the meantime,** while he was traveling to meet her, Rav Asi **heard**

that her coffin was coming, i.e., his mother had died and her coffin was being brought to Eretz Yisrael. **He said: Had I known I would not have left.** (Kiddushin 31b, adapted from the William Davidson Translation)

Insight

How could Rav Asi have left his mother and made Aliyah to Israel?

Based on Rav Asi’s actions, Rambam (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Mamrim 6:10) rules that one who is unable to cope with a parent’s dementia is permitted to leave, on condition that the parent would be properly taken care of. However, Raavad (commentary ad loc.) argues that simply appointing someone else is insufficient, and the child may not leave. Rabbi Shmuel Strasson (commentary to Kiddushin 31b) explains that according to Raavad, Rav Asi regretted his decision, believing that his mother died as a result of her attempt to follow him. Had he known that his mother would have been so distressed, he would never have left.

Based upon the above discussion, Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli ([Amud HaYemini 22](#)) rules that someone who is the primary care provider for a sick or elderly parent should not leave them, even to make Aliyah.

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Biography
Rabbi Azarya Ariel
Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

Rabbi Azarya Ariel is a current Rosh Yeshiva and halachic writer. He is part of a prominent rabbinic family. His father, Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, is the founder of Mechon HaMikdash (The Temple Institute) as well as Yeshivat HaMikdash, which is part of Mechon HaMikdash. Rabbi Azarya serves as the Rosh Yeshiva along with his father and several other rabbis. His uncle is the leading halachic authority Rabbi Yaakov Ariel, the former chief rabbi of Ramat Gan. His brother, Rabbi Shemuel Ariel, is the Rosh Kollel Halachah at Yeshivat Yerucham.

Rabbi Azarya frequently writes on halachic issues related to the Beit haMikdash in the journal published by the Institute, *Maalin BaKodesh*, as well as the journal *Emunat Itecha*. He is also a frequent respondent to halachic questions [here](#).

As part of Machon HaMikdash, Rabbi Azarya is also involved in preparing practically for the Beit haMikdash, such as by building the vessels of the Temple. Recently, he has been heavily involved in a project to locate *parot adumot* (red heifers), mostly from Texas, to bring them to Israel. He contends that as the *parah adumah* ritual takes place outside the Temple, it can be carried out even before the Temple is rebuilt. This would solve several halachic problems, as it would allow kohanim to become pure and eat *terumah* and *challah*. At the moment, a tremendous amount of produce is separated as *terumah* and then goes to waste as there are no pure *kohanim* to eat it. (For an interview explaining these issues, see [here](#).) Long term, this would also permit entering more areas on *Har HaBayit*.

Rabbi Azaria has also written about how modern problems will be dealt with in the Beit haMikdash. For example, he has written a defense of allowing wheelchairs into the Temple, despite the prohibition against sitting in the Temple (except for Davidic kings). The majority view is that prohibition is meant to honour the space (related to the prohibition against wearing shoes) and is thus not violated when done because of medical necessity. [See his article [here](#).]

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Torah and Translation
Birkat haMazon for People with Celiac Disease?
Rabbi Azarya Ariel, <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/91721>
Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

ההנחיה שחולי צליאק יברכו על לחמם המיוחד "שהכל" ו"בורא נפשות" היא הפסיקה המקובלת...

לאמיתו של דבר, לעניות דעתי היה מקום לומר שכאשר קבוצת אוכלוסיה מוגדרת ומובחנת איננה יכולה לאכול לחם מן הדגן, ועבורה לחם חלופי הוא המזון המשביע המרכזי, בדומה לשימושה של האוכלוסיה הכללית בישראל בלחם הרגיל, הרי שזהו לחם לגביהם, ויברכו עליו המוציא וברכת המזון כאילו היה ממני הדגן (אך לגבי הפרשת חלה ואכילת מצה עדיין הקובע הוא חמשת מיני דגן בלבד). הדבר תלוי בהבנת הסוגיות במסכת ברכות, האם ומדוע הברכה הוגבלה לחמשת מיני הדגן. בעקבות שאלתך כתבתי מאמר שמוקדש לנושא זה, אך לפי שעה רוב תלמידי החכמים שהגיבו עליו לא הסכימו למסקנתי ולכן בינתיים אני מנוע מלפסוק כך הלכה למעשה, ואני מקווה לפרסם אותו בהצעה לעיונם של תלמידי החכמים נוספים.

הדבר תלוי גם בבירור המציאות המדויקת בקרב חולי הצליאק, האם בפועל הם אכן משתמשים בלחמם המיוחד באותו היקף שמקובל אצל אחרים. לפי בדיקה לא מדעית שערכתי התשובה איננה חד משמעית: כנראה רובם משתמשים בו כרגיל, כגון לארוחת בוקר על בסיס לחם זה עם ממרחים ותו לא, אך לא מעטים מהם נמנעים מלחם זה בגלל טעמו ומחירו, או אוכלים ממנו מעט ולא מבססים עליו את שביעתם.

בכל אופן, מי שאוכל ארוחה מלאה ומשביעה ורוצה לברך בנוסף לברכה אחרונה שחייב בה גם את ברכת המזון הארוכה רשאי לומר אותה בלי שם ומלכות, כלומר: "ברוך אתה מלך העולם הזן את העולם... ברוך אתה הזן את הכל"... (כך הורה לי בעניינינו דודי הרב יעקב אריאל שליט"א. מעין זה פסק בשו"ת רבי אברהם בן הרמב"ם סי' פד לבני תימן שלא היה להם לחם מן הדגן והוא חשש שתשתכח מהם ברכת המזון, ואמנם כאן אין חשש דומה אבל מכל מקום יש ללמוד מדבריו שאין איסור בברכה כזו).

The directive that celiac patients bless on their special bread *shehakol* and *borei nefashot* is the currently accepted ruling...

The truth of the matter, in my humble opinion, is that there is room to say that when a defined and distinct population group cannot eat bread from grain, and for it the alternative bread is the main satiating food, similar to the general Israeli population's use of regular bread, then it is bread for them and they should bless *hamotzi* and *birkat hamazon* as though it were made of grain. [However, concerning the separation of *challah* and eating *matzah*, the determinant is only the five kinds of grain.] The issue depends on understanding the issues in the discussions in *Berachot*, whether and why the blessing was limited to the five species of grain. Because of your question, I wrote an article dedicated to this topic, but for now most of the Torah scholars who have commented on it do not agree with my conclusion. Thus, in the meantime I am prevented from ruling in this way in practice, and I hope to publish it as a suggestion for further investigation by more Torah scholars.

It also depends on clarifying the precise reality among celiac patients, whether in practice they actually use the special bread to the same extent that is the norm by others. According to an unscientific test I did, the answer is not unequivocal. It seems that most people use it as usual, such as for breakfast, [having] this bread with spreads and nothing more. But quite a few of them avoid this bread because of its taste and price, or eat a little of it and do not base their satiation on it.

In any case, whoever eats a full and satisfying meal and wants to bless, in addition to the final blessing they are obligated in, the long *birkat hamazon*, may say it without G-d's Name and [the reference to] Kingship, i.e. : "Blessed are You King of the world, who feeds the world ... Blessed are You who feeds all".... [So did my uncle, Rabbi Yaakov Ariel shlit"א rule for me about these matters. A similar ruling is in Rabbi Avraham ben HaRambam, Responsum #84, to the Yemenites who had no bread from grain. He feared that *birkat hamazon* would be forgotten by them. Although there is no similar fear here, one may learn from his words that such a blessing is not forbidden.]

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All times ET. Classes are free & open to all, unless otherwise noted.

Many of our classes are now starting summer hiatus, but learning opportunities remain!

Monday-Thursday

10:00 AM - Noon: Adult Seder Boker with Rabbi Moshe Yeres at Yeshivat Or Chaim!

Monday/Wednesday: Talmud Succah, Orot of Rav Kook

Tuesday/Thursday: Parshah, Tanach: Sefer Melachim

Shabbat June 24-25

After hashkamah R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

7:50 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Digging Up Torah: Hashkafah and Halachah, Shaarei Shomayim

20 min before minchah R' Steven Gotlib, Pirkei Avot, Village Shul

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT (Gruda Beis Medrash) (men)

After minchah Idan Rakovsky, Weekly Class, Shaarei Tefillah *not this week*

Sunday June 26

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver Program, Clanton Park (men)

9:15 AM Idan Rakovsky, The Torah of Rav Shagar, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university) *not this week*

9:30-11:00 AM Legal Ethics Seminar, with CPD Professionalism Credit (laypeople welcome)
R' Mordechai Torczyner, Ethical and Effective Crisis Counseling for Clients
Register at <https://torontotorah.com/cpd> / At BAYT and on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

Monday June 27

8:45 AM Idan Rakovsky, Likutei Moharan of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Into the Song of Songs, ZOOM <http://tiny.cc/idanrak> #3 of 5

7:30 PM Prielle & Idan Rakovsky, Song of the Week, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklysong>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Rescue in Halachah, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

Tuesday June 28

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, King Solomon's Arc, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> LAST CLASS!

7:00 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 15), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men) *not this week*

Wednesday June 29

6:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idolsarebad>

7:45 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

7:50 PM Idan Rakovsky, The Laws of Shabbat, Shaarei Tefillah— *note new time*

Thursday June 30

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Mei haShiloach, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 25), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women) *not this week*

7:00 PM R' Jared Anstandig, Contemporary Halachah, Shaarei Shomayim (university women) *not this week*

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Gemara Beitzah, email ymanntorontotorah.com for rotating location

Friday July 1

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Bava Batra Perek 2 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>

COMING UP 8:00 PM Monday JULY 10: S. Y. Agnon's *v'lo Nikashel* ("That we not stumble")
With R' Mordechai Torczyner, ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/agnon>

THANK YOU

to all of the high school students, returnees from Gap Year programs and university students
who learned with us for the month of June in our Summer Beit Medrash at Yeshivat Or Chaim!