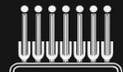




Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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2 Jun 2018 Parshas Beha'alosecha 19 Sivan 5778

Timeless Torah

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

I believe, you believe, we all believe.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be reading this column.

Yet, not all believers necessarily practice every one of the observances that are part of our belief system. We subscribe to the ideology. We don't necessarily advocate moving the goal posts. But not all of us are quite ready to put into practice all those wonderful ideals. Here in South Africa, we are Orthodox in our sentiments and in our affiliation, but not always necessarily in our observance

What is the underlying argument that allows us the luxury of that rationalisation? One which, in a moment of frankness, we might admit is somewhat inconsistent with our own stated beliefs?

I sometimes get the impression from people of a subconscious criticism of the traditions they have not yet embraced because they believe that these are out somewhat of touch with contemporary society. We happily accept those practices we identify with, but pronounce the others as old-fashioned, obsolete and out of step with the modern world. "Rabbi, once upon a time these traditions made sense, but today, do you really expect me to turn the clock back?"

So, some will argue that in an age of government inspection and accepted hygiene standards, Kashrut is obsolete. Others will claim that if G-d really intended man to walk on Shabbos, Henry Ford would never have invented the automobile. (A Jewish humorist who had a fear of flying once said that if G-d intended man to fly, surely He would have made it easier to get to the airport!) And still others contend that today

our sexual mores can only be determined by consensus and as long as it's between consenting adults, who cares what people are doing in their bedrooms?

The fact is that for many of us the laws of the Torah feel every bit of their 3300 years! Are we really and truly expected to adhere to this ancient code so seemingly out of synch with the modern reality?

Well, let's think about it. Are we suggesting that G-d who gave us these laws in the first place only had them in mind for those poor Israelites traipsing through the Sinai Desert? Is the Infinite One so myopic that He cannot see beyond His Jewish nose?

As a Rabbi once told an atheist, "The god you don't believe in, I don't believe in either." Unless we accept a G-d who could have seen the world today, I would refuse to believe in Him too. A real G-d sees past, present and future and is equally comfortable in our day as He was in the days of Moses. And the promised land of California is no more challenging to His credentials than the Promised Land of Canaan.

This week's Parsha tells us "And the Ark of the Covenant of Hashem journeyed before them..." Rashi interprets this to mean that the Ark which housed the Tablets would miraculously prepare the groundwork for their future encampments.

What it also is telling us is that, in fact, the Torah (as embodied by the Tablets) is way ahead of the game. It goes before us. It is not only timeless; it is ahead of its time.

I can think of so many values and lifestyles which have become trendy now which Torah has been encouraging for centuries.

I recall a Time magazine cover story focused on young moms who are putting successful careers on hold to

What's Nu?!

The Barmy Boys
Aaron Diamond

Mazal Tov to Bryan & Dana Diamond and to grandmother Arlene Utian.

Jacob Gordon

Mazal Tov to Phillip & Robyn Gordon.

Calendar

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Brocha across the Street.
- ◆ **Social Shabbos**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:45 pm
- ◆ Sponsored Shalosh Seudos.
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 2
- ◆ Shabbos Ends: 5:57 pm

SydShul Shiurim

- **Sunday morning 9-10 am: Mishna (Brochos) & Mysticism with Rabbi Yossy Goldman** (boardroom).
- **Tuesday 1:15-2:00 pm—Ladies Shiur. Parsha & Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Yossy Goldman** (Elk Hall)
- **Tuesday 7:45 pm - Gemorra Sotah with Rabbi Goldman** (Rabbi's home)
- **Wednesday 8:00 pm - Gemorra Ta'anis with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Rabbi's home).
- **Thursday 9:15 am (alternate) - Young Mother's Torah Class with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Elk Hall).
- **Shabbos 8:15 am - Soulful Study with Rabbi Yehuda Stern** (Shtibl)
- **Smorgasbord of Shiurim**

◆ **Nathan Fine** of Ideal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**

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- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org,
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.

pressing or applying pressure. Thus, to push a button is to *kvetch ah knepel*, and when a person is emotionally squeezed, small minded or otherwise suppressed, he or she is *farkvetchted*.

In Yiddish grammar, *kvetch* means "stress." For example, when saying the word "Yiddish," place the *kvetch* on the "Yid" and not on the "dish."

To shrug your shoulders is *tzu kvetchen de pleitzes*, and to spend long hours sitting on a bench studying Torah can be referred to (somewhat derisively) as "*kvetchen a bahnk*," pressing a bench.

To Kvetch Is Jewish

All that said, the most common meaning of *kvetch* (especially in English) is to complain. This is an old Jewish tradition. In the 40 years the Israelites spent wandering in the desert they would *kvetch* to Moses fairly often about the lack of fresh meat, fresh water, or other amenities.

Live & Laugh

One Shabbos morning Abe and Hymie are walking their dogs passed the shul. Abe says "Let's go in. I hear they have really nice chopped liver at the Kid-dush on Shabbat." Hymie says "They will never let us in with the dogs."

"Just follow my lead" says Abe and goes into the synagogue.

As he thought the Shammes tells him "No dogs are allowed." Abe replies "but it is my seeing eye dog." The Shammes tells him, "Sorry, I didn't know. OK you can go in."

Hymie follows and again the Shammes says "No dogs are allowed." Hymie says, "but it's my seeing eye dog." The Shammes says, "This is your seeing eye dog? A Chihuahua."

Hymie looks startled and says "Is that what they gave me?"

MAZEL TOV!!!

Our Charidy Crowdfunding Campaign was a great success.

We reached our target and beyond!
Big Thank You to Rabbi Yehuda Stern, the driving force, and to all our dedicated volunteers and donors. G-d bless you all!

stay home and nurture their children when they need them most. From the beginning, Torah exempted women from time-bound mitzvahs like Tefillin or thrice-daily Prayers so that they could fulfil the more important mitzvah of raising the next generation.

The Jewish tradition of sitting *shiva* when one loses a family member is today recognized by non-Jewish psychologists as being excellent bereavement therapy. Do you know how long ago the Torah gave us this practice? When Jacob cooked lentils for his father Isaac, it was because he was a mourner sitting *shiva* for Abraham. That's about 4000 years ago!

Whereas a generation ago, women spurned Mikveh as demeaning, today's young women are embracing it as a supreme acknowledgment of their innate sexuality and the most beautiful spiritual experience available to a woman. But there were mikvehs in Masada, and long before.

The whole explosion of a society in search of spirituality, with celebrities and pop icons studying the Kabbalah, only serves to validate the teachings of Jewish mysticism which are indeed of ancient days.

Bell bottoms have come and gone more than once and I'm sure they'll be back again and then recede once more until another season comes along. Paisley ties were once compulsory but today are *verboten*. Fads and fashions come and go but G-dly values, the morals of *menschlichkeit* and the mitzvahs of Torah are not behind the times. If anything, they are ahead of the times.

As He is beyond time, so are His commandments. If they appear in our mortal eyes as anachronistic, then that is our challenge - to relate Torah to our own realities and to shape our lives according to its standard. He intended it for us and our world too, so obviously it can be done.

The Torah is neither old nor new. Coming from an eternal supreme being, it is beyond time or space. It is timeless, and it should never surprise us how timely it may be.

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Parsha Pointers

Beha'aloscha: Artscroll pg 774;

Living Torah pg 702

Aaron is commanded to raise light in the lamps of the menorah, and the tribe of Levi is initiated into the service in the Sanctuary.

A "Second Passover" is instituted in response to the petition "Why should we be deprived?" by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure. G-d instructs Moses on the procedures for Israel's journeys and encampments in the desert, and the people journey in formation from Mount Sinai, where they had been camped for nearly a year.

The people are dissatisfied with their "bread from heaven" (the manna) and demand that Moses supply them with meat. Moses appoints 70 elders, to whom he emanates of his spirit, to assist him in the burden of governing the people. Miriam speaks negatively of Moses and is punished with leprosy; Moses prays for her healing and the entire community waits seven days for her recovery.

There is No Such Thing as an Anti-Semite

By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

The Torah relates how when the Children of Israel would break camp to embark on their travels through the desert, Moses would proclaim: "*Arise, O G-d, scatter Your opponents, and make Your enemies flee from before You...*"

The Roman emperor Hadrian was an incurable Jew-hater. Once, while walking in state, visiting his subjects, he observed a Jewish man among the crowd of well-wishers; "What, an accursed Jew insults my Majesty by greeting me in public? Take him away and crucify him!"

Word of Hadrian's despotic action quickly got around, and the next time Hadrian went touring, a Jew who was unlucky enough to be in the vicinity made sure to keep away from the crowd, utter no words of greeting, and remain crouched by the wayside in an attitude of total submission.

"What, an accursed Jew insults my Majesty by ignoring me in public? Crucify him!" cried the emperor.

When the emperor's counselors wondered about the blatant inconsistency of his actions, Hadrian replied, "Don't teach me how to deal with my enemies."

But were the Jews really his enemy? Could a mere people have elicited such bottomless hatred? It is significant that, in the above-cited verse, Moses does not call upon G-d to defend us against those who are hostile to us, but to "scatter *Your* opponents... *Your* enemies."

The age-old struggle between Jew and Jew-hater is a misnomer. I remember, visiting the Nazi death-camp Dachau, how infuriating it was to see at the crematoria the large placard dedicating the site "to those who died in the fight against Nazism." The memorial might be somewhat appropriate for the political opponents of the regime who suffered and died there, but my grandfather's uncle, cousins and thousands of other martyrs didn't die fighting anything. Far as they were concerned, they were happy to lead private lives before Hitler and his henchmen came looking for them. To term it a "struggle" between innocent victim and executioner is as inappropriate as describing modern-day society's effort to protect themselves from suicide bombers a "cycle of violence."

The struggle is not between our enemies and ourselves. Rather G-d's antagonists attack us as the pawns in their battle against righteousness and G-dliness. Jew-hatred is so engrained and pervasive that no logical or rational explanation for the phenomenon can possibly be attached, other than to define it as the wicked man's eternal struggle against Divinity.

If they're not fighting us but fighting G-d, our only viable response is to live and act like Jews no matter the provocation. When it becomes apparent that their hatred towards us is predicated on our special relationship with G-d, then it becomes G-d's responsibility to defend Himself from *His* opponents and enemies and come to our rescue, freeing us to resume our historic mission of representing G-dliness to the world.

Miriam's Courage

By Rabbi Yitschak Meir Kagan

At the conclusion of the parshah we read how when Miriam had to live outside of Israel's desert encampment for seven days, "...the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in again" (Numbers 12:15).

A few million people, with all their leaders, their prophets, judges, elders and sages delayed their scheduled journeying to wait for one individual! For

they remembered; they remembered how she had waited at the banks of the Nile to guard her baby brother Moses floating in the reed box in the river; they remembered how Miriam, a little girl, had moulded Israel's destiny and changed the course of history...

Amram, father of Aaron and Miriam, was the leader of the generation prior to the Exodus from Egypt. When Pharaoh decreed "Every son that is born you shall throw into the river" (Exodus 1:22) Amram declared that it was useless to continue bearing children, and he divorced his wife Jochebed. All the Jews followed his example and divorced their wives. Then Miriam spoke up. Only six years old at the time, and well aware that her father was righteous and the leader of the nation, she courageously voiced her conviction: "Your decree is worse than Pharaoh's! For Pharaoh only decreed against the boys; but you decree against boys and girls. Pharaoh is an evil man, and his decree may or may not be effective; but you are a righteous person and your decree will be effective."

Miriam declared that one must follow G-d's commands, including the precept to "...be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 9:1) without regard to "logic" or "rationale" and without regard to the consequences. Amram recognized the truth and sincerity of his little daughter's words. He immediately remarried Jochebed, and all Israel, inspired by his example, followed suit.

What was the result of Miriam's actions? Moses was born; and as soon as his mother placed him in the river, Pharaoh's astrologers declared, "Their deliverer has already been thrown into the water" and the decree (to drown all male children) was revoked.

The undaunted courage of a six-year-old girl, to "tell it like it is" even to the leader of the generation, effected the annulment of the evil decree while still in the exile of Egypt, and eventually brought deliverance, through Moses, not only for herself, for her parents and for her family, but for all Israel.

What Does "Kvetch" Mean?

Kvetch literally means "squeeze" in Yiddish, and commonly refers to *whining, complaining, and grouching*. A person who *kvetches* incessantly can also be referred to as a *kvetch*.

In Yiddish, *kvetch* still retains its original meaning of