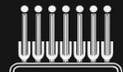




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Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!



9 Jun 2018 Parshas Shelach 26 Sivan 5778

Draw Your Own Conclusion?

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Some conclusions are more obvious to come to than others. Sometimes the most obvious conclusion isn't necessarily correct. Drawing our own conclusions can often be a risky business.

Take the case in this week's Parsha. The spies sent by Moses return from their reconnaissance mission of the Promised Land with a frightening report about the fierce, warrior nations of Canaan. The Jewish People are dejected, frightened, and even weep at the thought of their impending invasion, convinced it can only be a suicidal mission impossible. The Almighty is angered, the people are punished for their lack of faith in His promise, and the spies go down in history as the villains in the story.

But why? What, in fact, was their sin? Moses asked for a report of the land. They came back and reported exactly what they had seen. They told no lies. The land **was** formidable. The inhabitants **were** huge and powerful. The fruits **were** extraordinarily large. They even brought back samples to prove it. So if it was all true why were they punished?

The answer lies not in the report but in their conclusion. The facts as the spies presented them were entirely accurate. The sin was their conclusion, *Lo nuchal la'alot* – "We cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us." Moses had sent them on a fact finding mission. Their job was to bring back information. Nobody asked them for their personal opinions. The whole point of their mission was to gather the data neces-

sary for the Israelites to find the best way of conquering the land. That it was going to happen was a given. G-d had promised them the land, told them of its natural beauty and assured them of success.

The same G-d who just miraculously delivered you from Egypt, the mightiest superpower on earth, split the sea for you and revealed Himself in all His glory to you at Sinai has now said that the Promised Land is there waiting for you. And after all He has done for you; you turn around and publicly doubt His power to help you succeed. This is not only a mistake in judgment. This is shameful, sinful and faithless. The spies' report was correct but their conclusion was disastrous.

A high school teacher decided to demonstrate to his class the dangers of alcohol abuse. So he conducted an experiment. He took one glass of water and one glass of whisky. He then took a little worm and dropped it in the glass of water. The worm had a nice swim and then the teacher removed the worm unharmed. He then dropped the worm into the glass of whisky. In no time at all, the worm was dead. He then turned to the class and asked them what the experiment proved. Whereupon one wise guy at the back piped up and said, "Sir, it proves conclusively that if you drink enough whisky you will never suffer from worms!"

The facts are there for all of us to see. The question is how to interpret them. If we have a preconceived position and then manipulate the data to draw conclusions that suit us, we may come off clever at first but in the end we may well go the

ly the opposite—He limited Himself, lowered Himself to make a physical world. It would be like the brilliant musician having to write a corny jingle about yogurt for a radio ad. Does that express his genius? **No!** It expresses his patience! Similarly, G-d didn't need to invest "effort" in creating such an amazing world. The only effort was in His limiting Himself to create such a finite existence.

The *tallit* has two parts: the garment itself, and the *tzitzit* (fringes). The garment surrounds our body, and the fringes hang off it. They represent the two aspects of G-d's being. His true self is totally beyond our capacity to grasp, represented by the garment that envelops us. It is only a tiny fraction of His being, the little fringes dangling off the corners, that we can experience.

No matter how holy we feel, G-d is infinitely holier. He is the *tallit* that surrounds us. But no matter how unholy we feel, G-d comes down to us and asks us to talk to Him. He is the *tzitzit* reaching down for us to grab on to and kiss.

We need to have this in mind when we pray, so we wear a *tallit*.

Live & Laugh

Mendel goes into the optometrist's office. He opens the door and says to the receptionist, "I think I need my eyes checked."

She says, "You're not kidding. This is the Ladies Room."

Son: Dad, would you do my math homework for me?
Dad: No, son, it wouldn't be right.
Son: Well, at least you could try.

What's Nu?!

Choson Kallah Mazal Tov
Dylan Berger & Sarah Shapiro
The Barmy Boy
Adiv Blumenthal
Mazal Tov to Ivor & Robyn Blumenthal.

Calendar

Shabbos Mevorchim Tammuz
Molad: Wed 18:05:07

- ◆ **Tehillim Club:** 7:15 am
- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ **Shabbos Shmooz** with *Rebbetzin Estee:* 10:00 - 10:30 am
- ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by the **Blumenthal Family** in honour of Adiv's Bar Mitzvah, **Dylan Berger** in honour of his Oifruf, and **Steven & Rochell Nossel** in honour of their grandkids and specifically for the recent arrival Atarah Zahava as well as the Opsheren for Naftali on Sunday.
- ◆ **Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:45 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 3
- ◆ Shabbos Ends: 5:57 pm
- ◆ Mincha next week: 5:20 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh:** Wed 13 & Thurs 14 June

- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- ◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- ◆ Lisa Milner, Rental Consultant 082 362 4870 e-mail: lisam@jawitz.co.za
- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org,
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.

Sydenham Shul Presents
Wendy Kahn
National Director, SA Jewish Board of Deputies
#Downgrade#Upgrade:
Engage or Enrage?
The Year That Was in SA:
June 2017 - June 2018
Followed by Q & A
This Shabbos After the Brocha
At the Sushi & Black Label Farbrengen
Elk Hall

way of the spies. Without faith, even the most accurate information can lead to the wrong conclusion.

Parsha Pointers

*Shelach: Artscroll Chumash pg 798;
Living Torah pg 723*

Moses sends twelve spies to the Land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge cluster of grapes, a pomegranate and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are giants and warriors “more powerful than we”; only Caleb and Joshua insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.

The people weep that they’d rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel’s entry into the Land shall be delayed forty years, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of Land, and are routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The laws of the *menachot* (meal, wine and oil offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (*challah*) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by gathering sticks, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (*tzitzit*) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should remember to fulfill the mitzvah (divine commandments).

My First Halachic Question

By Rabbi Elisha Greenbaum

I’d been on the job for just a few weeks when one of our members hesitantly approached me after services: “Rabbi,” he began, “may I ask you a question in *halachah*?”

Yes! I was ready! This was what I’d entered the rabbinate for. This was why I’d spent

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years attending international *yeshivas* and studying for my *semichah* ordination. Ask me your halachic question, please.

“Rabbi,” he continued, “you know where I live, and you know how I get to shul on Shabbat. For the last few months, whenever I’ve come to shul, I have started to wear *tzitzit* under my shirt. Wearing them makes me feel good inside.

“However, this morning, as I was driving to shul, I started to wonder whether I wasn’t acting hypocritically. Should a Shabbat-breaker like me really be wearing such a holy garment as *tzitzit*? Rabbi, what do you think—should I stop wearing them?”

I’ve got to admit, at first I was a tiny bit disappointed. This was the halachic question I was waiting for? So much for my rosy vision of engaging in an in-depth analysis of some weighty issue of Jewish law. The answer seemed so obvious: of course he shouldn’t take his *tzitzit* off. Every mitzvah is an independent path to G-dliness, and the neglect of one commandment should not preclude the fulfilment of another.

However, one of the most useful pieces of advice I ever received in life was a favourite saying of my father’s: “Before you answer a question, ask yourself, ‘Why is this person asking you this question at this time?’”

Thankfully, before I could blithely shoot off a response, I checked my initial impulse and gave his question the attention and respect it deserved. On reflection, I realized that he wasn’t really asking me “a halachic question”; he could have worked out the *halachah* easily enough for himself. He was really looking for an opportunity to explore his feelings of unease at his current unstructured approach to Judaism, and looking for reassurance that it was all right to take his own time and follow his own path to observance.

My new congregant and I spent a fair bit of time chatting with each other and trying to understand each other better. I learned far more about his past relationship with Judaism, as well as his current needs and desires, than I would have if I had just answered his question without giving him the time he needed to unburden.

One insight that seemed to give him some comfort was that the reason we wear *tzitzit* is so that

“when you see them, you will remember all the commandments of the L-rd, to perform them” (Numbers 15:39). Wearing *tzitzit* is supposed to remind us of the other mitzvahs. You can even say they’re supposed to make us feel guilty. They’re doing their job!

Mitzvahs are addictive; if you do some, you’ll be tempted to do more. Obviously, it’s unwise and unhelpful to do too much too fast, but the natural temptation is to do more. What my friend was mistaking for unease at hypocrisy was really his conscience urging him to take the next step on his journey to Judaism, and stop driving to shul. You don’t stop wearing *tzitzit* because they’re doing what they’re supposed to; rather, you ready yourself to take the next step that *you’re* supposed to.

There is no shame in doing a mitzvah, and no reason to desist just because you’re not yet fully ready to take on another. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. Every step is just another stage towards “performing all the commandments of the L-rd” and readying oneself to listen to G-d’s message when he calls.

The Whole Truth

By Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg

The rabbi wound up the services one morning by saying, “Next week I am going to preach on the subject of honesty and truthfulness. And in this connection, as a preparation for my discourse, I would like you all to read the fifty-first chapter of Genesis.”

The following week, the rabbi rose to begin and said, “Now, then, all of you who have done as I requested and read the fifty-first chapter of Genesis, please raise your hands.”

Nearly every hand in the congregation went up.

Then said the rabbi, “You are the people I want to talk to. There is no fifty-first chapter in Genesis...”

A familiar story? How often do we find ourselves in similar situations? At such times, we often convince ourselves that we are not really lying, it is not so bad, it is almost true. We find that the “whole truth” is a valuable commodity and one which it is not always so easy to come by.

In this week’s Torah reading, the spies are sent to the land of Israel, then Canaan, to spy out the land. They came back with falsified reports. They began, however, by telling the people that “We came to the land where you did send us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey...”

The Talmud comments that “Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: Any piece of slander which does not have some truth in the beginning, will not endure in the end.” Every lie has a little truth mixed into it. Unfortunately, all too often, the truth has a little falsehood mixed into it too.

Pursuit of truth is a recurring theme in Jewish tradition. The Torah is frequently referred to as the Torah of truth and the discernment of truth is seen as an essential requirement for navigating our way through life.

The Kabbalah of the Tallit

By Rabbi Aron Moss

Question:

What is the deeper significance of the Tallit?

Answer:

The main idea of Jewish prayer is to connect to G-d. But how can a finite, limited human being connect to an infinite, unlimited G-d? Really, it should be impossible. But G-d wants a relationship with us, so He “limited” Himself. He did this by expressing Himself in creation. The world we live in is actually an expression of G-d. Just like a piece of music is an expression of the musician who wrote it, and a painting is an expression of the painter, so too this world and everything in it is G-d’s work of art. We can’t see G-d, but we can see His creation. So, just as by looking at a painting or hearing a song we can get a feeling of who the artist is, by observing the beauty of this world, its complexity and its rhythms, we can begin to appreciate G-d.

But (and this is a big but), even though creation expresses G-d, it could never express His real self. As beautiful as the world is, it is only an insignificant fraction of G-d’s true wisdom. And this is where G-d is very different from an artist. To truly express himself, the artist has to put all his concentration, effort and creativity into his work. But for G-d to express Himself, it’s exact-