



Bet Horaah בית הוראה Shaarei Ezra שערי עזרא

Parshat Vayetzei

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 4:14pm

Shabbat ends: 5:16pm

R"T 5:44pm

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THE STARK CONTRAST: EXAMINING THE DIFFERENCE IN YOUTH BEHAVIOR

WRITTEN BY RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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If you had your first child, and that child is the first of the holy Shvatim who are the building blocks of Klal Israel, what would you name him? Considering that the name has a significant impact, you probably would want to name him a name that has to do with Hashem, such as Eliyahu or Elad. However, Leah decides to name her first child Reuven. Why?

Rashi explains that the name is a combination of two words: ראו, "see" and "difference," meaning "see the difference" between my child and my father-in-law's child, Esav. She referred to the fact that although Esav sold his firstborn right, he still afterward chased after Yitschak to kill him for owning it. In contrast, Reuven, even though he lost his birthright to Yosef, who took the leadership from him, still tried to save his life. But one must ask, how did she know at the time she named her child that there is such a difference when the child is still a baby?

The answer is clear. Leah named him this name in order to instill in him from a very early age the understanding that he must not act like his uncle Esav. He should know that he is elevated and should make sure to act this way towards others. When you teach a child from a young age that they must treat others with respect and dignity and forgive them for taking their honor, they grow to be such people.

Last week, the distinction between our community and others was prominently displayed at the Jewish rally in Washington, DC. Buses filled with attendees from schools, synagogues, and community centers across the country arrived, turning the Mall into a vibrant sea of people from New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, Boston, Philadelphia, and various other places. They proudly waved American and Israeli flags, holding signs expressing unwavering support.

As the event unfolded, nearly 300,000 individuals

gathered on the Mall, the national park nestled between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument, demonstrating immense solidarity with the Jewish people and the State of Israel. This gathering served as a profound Kiddush Hashem, standing in stark contrast to the violent protests seen globally. Just days later at the DNC,

six officers were treated for injuries as a result of a Palestinian demonstration attempting to break into the building. Additionally, during a violent rally in Washington which took place a week prior, Pro-Palestinian protesters vandalized the White House gates

with red paint and attempted to scale the fence around the president's residence. At another demonstration in Los Angeles, tragically a Jewish man lost his life at the hands of an Arab professor.

I always remember the way King David expresses it in Tehilim (chapter 144). He first explains that he is going to war and then continues to elaborate on the difference between the Jewish people and their enemies. David is expressing that this evident distinction provokes jealousy in the enemy, leading them to harbor animosity, ultimately prompting him to engage in war to safeguard his people.

The verses in Tehilim (144) say: Blessed is Hashem, who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for warfare; Rescue me, save me from the hands of foreigners, whose mouths speak lies, and whose oaths are false.

Then he continues to explain the reason the enemy comes to fight the war, and we'll explain each pasuk below:

The Pasuk says: "For our sons are like saplings, well-tended in their youth; our daughters are like cornerstones, trimmed to give shape to a palace". David is highlighting the distinction between our young generation, encompass-



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ing both boys and girls, and that of our adversaries.

The truth is that, instead of explaining, one should just take a look at pictures of our youth at the Washington rally and then look at pictures of the other rallies, or better say- riots. You can also see the difference every day when you walk the streets. See how our youth is well-behaved, well-mannered, respectfully dressed, good-looking, etc., as the rioters are exactly the opposite. And that is only the external. The internal difference is like the distance of the two poles and even further.

The pasuk continues: "Our storehouses are full, supplying produce of all kinds; our flocks number thousands, even myriads, in our fields"

Kind David is pointing out another distinction here, illustrating how the Jewish people are actively contributing to the prosperity and success of life. In contrast, the enemies are primarily focused on constructing destructive means. The rapid transformation of Israel into a global power with a flourishing economy and innovation within just over 70 years stands as a testament to this stark difference.

Finally he points out the difference in the leadership: "Our leaders are willingly followed by the people. There is no breaching and no sortie, and no wailing in our

streets."

King David highlights the contrast in leadership, emphasizing that Jewish leaders are righteous scholars with elevated character traits, whereas the enemy leaders are cowards who incite for genocides and hide behind human shields.

Those are just a few of the many differences between the forces of good and evil, but they are sufficient to ignite jealousy and hatred among the enemies, driving them to madness.

However, there was another important achievement at that rally – the establishment of mutual support. With so many people gathered, there was a palpable sense of unity, a much-needed sentiment in these times. This not only showcases strength to our enemies but also fosters a sense of solidarity among us. Those who attended the rally experienced a unique feeling, a sense of togetherness for a common cause that was unprecedented.

The verse in Tehilim (133) states: "How good and how pleasant it is that brothers dwell together." According to Metsudat Zion, this verse conveys that despite differences of opinion within Klal Israel, it is truly pleasant to witness when Klal Israel can come together and rise above those differences.

HYPOCRISY AND TWO-FACED ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE: EXAMINING SELECTIVE OUTRAGE IN POLITICAL STANCES

How hypocritical can Turkey be for condemning a justified war when, on 1915, the Ottoman authorities, which is present-day Turkey, arrested and deported hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and leaders from Constantinople? An estimated 800,000 to 1.2 million Armenians were subjected to death marches to the Syrian Desert in 1915 and 1916.

How hypocritical can Syria be for criticizing Israel after massacring over half a million of its own citizens, solely for opposing the sitting government?

How about Russia, which caused the death of close to 500,000 in their neighboring country without a justified reason?

And the list goes on, with almost every country and establishment that stands with the "peaceful Palestinians," who claim to seek only to live in peace and flourish.

Watching the world's hypocrisy in how it treats the situation in Israel brings to mind the first hypocrite from our parasha, Lavan. Let's analyze his name – Lavan means white. Why would someone be named white? The name is intended to camouflage Lavan's true colors, which are anything but white.

While his outward appearance and behavior may have seemed white, his true essence was far from it. In the teachings of Chazal, a hypocrite is aptly described as צבוע "colored." This characterization might stem from the idea that such individuals project various hues that diverge from their authentic selves, revealing the inconsistency between their external facade and internal reality.

Upon meeting Lavan with Yaakov, he rushes towards him, hugs him, kisses him, and displays affection. However, the reality is that these hugs were not loving hugs, but rather to check if Yaakov is hiding money in his pockets, and the

kisses were meant to determine if he is concealing diamonds in his mouth. It reveals a two-faced nature, where the exterior shows love, but internally, Lavan is motivated by his own selfish interests.



Lavan then invites Yaakov to stay in his house, asserting that as relatives; he is welcomed, expressing his open hospitality. However, despite the invitation, it wasn't without a cost; Yaakov ends up working for Lavan as a shepherd.

The Ramban explains that Lavan skillfully steered the conversation by expressing a desire to have Yaakov stay with him without compensation. However, Lavan acknowledged that Yaakov's moral principles would prevent him from accepting such an arrangement.

Therefore, recognizing Yaakov's elevated standards, Lavan proposed that Yaakov could contribute by working for him, allowing him to remunerate for his stay.

Then, Yaakov requests Lavan's permission to marry his daughter Rachel, anticipating the possibility of deception. Yaakov makes his intentions crystal clear, emphasizing that he specifically desires Rachel. To prevent any potential manipulation, Yaakov goes further, insisting that the intended bride must indeed be Lavan's daughter Rachel. Despite these precautions, Lavan still manages to deceive Yaakov by substituting Leah for Rachel. Lavan, in a display of apparent righteousness, justifies the switch by asserting the impropriety of marrying the younger daughter before the older. This deceptive act exposes the contradiction between Lavan's professed morality and his actions.

Perhaps this is why Hashem cautioned Lavan against communicating with Yaakov, whether with positive or negative (פרק לא, כד). Why discourage positive communication?

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The concern may lie in the fact that Lavan's seemingly favorable words could be deceptive, as they might stem from a hypocritical nature—superficially appearing good but concealing underlying negativity. This aligns with King Solomon's wisdom: "Do not be overly righteous nor overly wicked" (Kohelet 7:16-17). In a similar vein, the Sages advise caution against individuals who, like Zimri, simulate righteousness while secretly pursuing self-interest, akin to Pinchas (כח). This warning underscores the importance of discerning sincerity in both positive and negative interactions.

How can one effectively handle a deceptive individual? We find guidance from the example of Yaakov Avinu. When Rachel cautions him about her deceitful brother, Lavan, Yaakov responds by expressing his intention to engage with Lavan in a

manner reflective of Lavan's own conduct (Rashi יב). If Lavan chooses honesty, Yaakov is prepared to reciprocate with honesty. However, if Lavan resorts to deception, Yaakov is ready to outsmart him in his own cunning game.

This serves as a valuable guide for us as well. While it may not always be feasible to confront a two-faced person directly, there are instances where mirroring their approach becomes necessary. Nevertheless, the overarching reality remains that, in most cases, honesty and truth prevail. Dealing straightforwardly, exposing the truth, and shedding light on dishonesty often yield better results, especially in the face of today's prevalent hypocrisy. The power of truth stands as a potent force, capable of fostering genuine understanding and bringing about positive change.

SHABBAT SURVEILLANCE: BALANCING SECURITY AND HALACHIC PERSPECTIVES.

During these perilous times, the imperative for robust security measures in our homes and synagogues is readily apparent. One method to enhance security is through the use of surveillance cameras. However, a crucial question arises concerning the permissibility of operating these security cameras on Shabbat when continuous recording is taking place. Various rabbinic authorities have raised concerns, and we aim to explore these issues to ascertain whether leniency can be applied in light of the urgent need for enhanced security.

The initial concern revolves around the prohibition of writing on a screen. The restriction on writing during Shabbat encompasses more than just the act of physically penning letters; it also includes the formation of images or figures, like taking a photo or video of someone (משנה ברורה סימן שמ סעיף כב אות ח). Consequently, it might be deemed inappropriate to stand in front of a camera or surveillance camera on Shabbat and be photographed.

There are several opinions on this matter. Some assert that (רש"י אורבך בשלחן שלמה סימן שמ אות יב מאור השבת ח"ד עמוד קצט) such writing is not deoraita (biblical prohibition) since it does not adhere to the conventional manner of writing; rather, it is akin to projecting lights onto a screen. Furthermore, since this type of writing remains in the device's memory and is not visible until uploaded, it differs significantly from standard writing.

On the contrary, Shevet Halevi (ח"ו סלי"ז) contends that it is deoraita, as it exists within the memory and endures until the user opts to upload it.

Rav Elyashiv (מאור השבת שמ) shared the perspective that if the image is actively visible on the screen, it falls under the category of deoraita. However, if the writing merely contributes to the memory without immediate visibility, it is not considered deoraita. Thus to ensure there is no violation of Shabbat, it is advised to turn off the computer screen. This precaution prevents the images from being visible on Shabbat, even if they are recorded in the memory.

Another leniency was proposed by Rav Moshe Feinstein, who argues that it's considered "psik reisha delo nicha le" —

meaning, even though it's an inevitable outcome that a person will be filmed when passing the camera, it is still permitted because the individual is indifferent to it and derives no benefit from being filmed by the camera.



This also allows the owner of the camera to pass by the filming camera, as he derives no personal benefit from being filmed. The camera is kept on primarily for the purpose of capturing potential thieves or perpetrators, and the owner does not gain any advantage from being recorded by the camera.

Chacham Ovadia (יביע אומר ח"ט סימן לה) presents a distinct rationale for permission, drawing from the teachings in the book "Keren L'David." This work addresses a scenario where a soldier is required to provide his picture to the army, necessitating photography on Shabbat. In this context, he permits the soldier to stand in front of the photographer, as there is no direct violation involved in being in the camera's view. This is particularly relevant when the camera is constantly recording everything, and the mere act of a person walking by does not entail any prohibited action.

Rav Shlomo Amar (שו"ת שמע שלמה ח"ו ס"ג) permits the scenario where a guard is actively monitoring a surveillance camera as someone passes by. This leniency extends even if the guard possesses the capability to manipulate the camera and track the individual. The rationale behind this permission is the guard's suspicion that the person may be a potential perpetrator, and his actions are motivated by a concern for the safety of others.

Moreover, Rav Shmuel Vosner (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י סימן ס') explained that when a person passes by and triggers an event, such as a light operating with a sensor turning on, it is permitted. The rationale is that the person is simply passing by and minding their own business, with no direct involvement in or connection to the occurrences in that specific area. Accordingly, a person would be permitted to pass by even if surveillance is filming him.

Still, Rav Vosner suggested that if one can avoid the camera, it is advisable to do so to prevent the possibility of disrespecting Shabbat. However, Rav Amar disagreed with this perspec-

WARFARE AND TORAH COMMANDMENTS IN TIMES OF CONFLICT.

tive, asserting that there is no problem at all with passing by the camera on Shabbat.

I think it's reasonable to assume that in today's dangerous times, even those poskim who initially advocated for re-

strictions on such cameras would likely permit their use for safety reasons. This includes passing by them, especially in areas with diverse populations, considering the various le-niencies discussed earlier.

קניית מלית ותפילין ממעשר כספים.

ואין לחלק בין צדקה למעשר, שהמעשר הוא שיעור הצדקה שיש לאדם ליתן, וכמובא בשולחן ערוך (יו"ד סימן רמט ס"א): "שיעור נתינתה (של מצות הצדקה) אם ידו משגת יתן כפי צורך העניים. ואם אין ידו משגת כל כך, יתן עד חומש נכסיו, מצוה מן המובחר. ואחד מעשרה- מדה בינונית. פחות מכאן עין רעה".

אלא שיש שהתירו לקנות בכספי מעשר דברי מצוות על מנת לזכות בהם אחרים. וכך הביאו הט"ז והש"ך (על דברי הרמ"א דלעיל) שמותר ליתן מן המעשר על מנת לזכות להיות בעל ברית או להכניס חתן וכלה לחופה, וכן לקנות ספרים על מנת להשאיל לאחרים ללמוד בהם.

אלא שיש לדעת שההיתר הנ"ל הוא רק עבור מצוות שאינו חייב לקיימן. ועל זה אמרו את הכלל ש'דבר שבחובה אינו בא אלא מן החולין', כלומר שמצוות שיש עליו חיוב לקיימן, כגון מזוזה או תפילין לעצמו אינו יכול לקנותן בכספי מעשר אלא רק מכספו שלו.

ועל פי דברים אלו הסביר בבאר הגולה (אות ה') שבעצם אין מחלוקת בין הרמ"א לט"ז והש"ך, כיון שהם דיברו על שני מקרים שונים. הרמ"א דיבר על מצוה שאדם מחויב לקיימה ולכן אינו רשאי לקנותה מן המעשר, ואילו המפרשים שהתירו דיברו על מצוה שאינו מחויב לקיימה.

ואכן כבר פשט המנהג להתיר לקנות דברי מצוה עבור אחרים שאין בידם יכולת לקנות עבור עצמם, וכך פסק החפץ חיים (אהבת חסד פרק יט סק"ב).



שלום לכבוד הרב.

בעקבות המצב הקשה השורר בארצנו ובעולם כולו, התעוררו רבים לקיים מצוות טלית ותפילין ובניהם גם חיילים שלא זכו שיהיה להם ציצית זוג תפילין. ולכן רבים נחלצו לסייע ברכישת מצוות אלו עבורם, וגם אני מעוניין להשתתף בקניית מצוות חשובות אלו, אלא שרציתי לברר אם מותר להשתמש בכספי מעשר עבור זה.

שלום לשואל, ואשריכם ישראל שתמיד עושים ככל יכולתם עבור הזולת.

הנה הרב משה פינשטיין (בשו"ת אגרות משה יו"ד ח"ב סימן קמא) מ'אן בדבר וכתב וז"ל: "אין עיקר מצות צדקה אלא בעניי אכילה ושתיה ומלבושים, ולא בקניית דברים הצריכים למצוה...וליתן מעות לעניי לקנות תפילין ומזוזה וציצית אינו ענין צדקה, אלא דבר גדול הוא במה שעושה שיוכל העני לקיים מצות השם".

ומדבריו אלו עולה שאף שאכן דבר גדול הוא, אולם אי אפשר לרכוש ממעות צדקה עבור החיילים ציצית ותפילין, וכך אכן כתב הרמ"א (יו"ד סימן רמט ס"א) בשם המהרי"ל שאין לעשות ממעשר שלו דבר מצוה, כגון נרות לבית הכנסת או שאר דבר מצוה, רק יתנו לעניים.

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