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Parshat Behar

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 7:56pm

Shabbat ends: 9:05pm

R"T 9:28pm

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FATEFUL FLIGHT AND WINGS OF RETRIBUTION: WAS IT AN ACCIDENT OR A STRATEGIC MOVE?

WRITTEN BY RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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It's hard to avoid seeing the similarity between what is happening recently in Iran and the holiday of Purim, which both took place in Persia. At that time, the Jews were persecuted by Haman, who was second to the king and wanted to kill all the Jews in one day. The result was that Haman was killed. Similarly, in our time, the second in command in Iran who tirelessly tried to kill all the Jews in one day with unconventional weapons was also killed.

We also learn from the story of Esther that things happen in steps: first, Hashem elevates the Jews, and then He eliminates the wicked, as Zeresh told her husband Haman: "If Mordechai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will continue to fall before him." The nature of the way Hashem operates is that when He starts turning the tables on the enemies of Am Yisrael, the tables are turned completely. Since we are beginning to see the downfall of the Iranians, it should continue to be so until we are completely elevated.

But why do things happen this way, with the downfall occurring in stages rather than all at once? The Vilna Gaon explains that Hashem's way is to first elevate us before He defeats our enemies, so that people around the world, especially our enemies, will see that Hashem is the one in control and that He favors Am Israel. He writes: "When Hashem saves His people Israel from their oppressors who stand against them, He first redeems them and does good to them. Afterwards, He avenges their vengeance against the enemies, as in Egypt, where He first redeemed them and then destroyed the Egyptians in the Sea of Reeds. Similarly, with Haman, He first did elevated Mordechai, and then He brought down Haman and hanged him, so that he himself would see the greatness of Israel and recognize that the Hashem is God throughout the earth.

And when He does good to the righteous, then the whole city rejoices but they still do not yet sing praises to Him. However, afterwards, when He takes vengeance on those who stand against them, then they sing

praises."

This important pattern should guide us today as our nation is fighting a war and BH defeating our vicious enemy. The enemy will be vanquished, completing the victory that expresses Kiddush Hashem.

Going back to the recent event: whether the helicopter accident with the president of Iran in it was an accident or the clean work of the Israeli Mossad, this week the world is a better place than last week with the absence of the wicked, evil butcher. But on second thought, since the wicked regime is still ruled by the Ayatollah, nothing might really change, and it could be business as usual. That might all be true when viewing things from a physical outlook, but when viewing from a spiritual outlook, we get a totally different picture.

There are various places where Chazal explain to us that wicked people cause Hashem to be angry at the world. For example, at the end of Gemara Sanhedrin (דף ק"ג, ב). Chazal say that as long as the wicked exist in the world, there is wrath and rage in the world. On the opposite, when they are eliminated, good comes to the world. That is the reason King Shlomo says, "When the wicked perish there is joy" (משלי יא, י).

The words the Gemara keeps on repeating are "חרון אף." If we try to look for other sources in the Torah that use this term, we will get a clear picture of what happens when a wicked person dwells in this world. When Hashem approaches Moshe Rabbeinu and asks him to become the messenger to speak to Pharaoh, Moshe refuses again and again until Hashem becomes angry. The words in the pasuk are **ויחר אף ה'** במשה. But what happens when Hashem gets angry? Rashi tells us, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha, that Hashem's anger carries a punishment. This can be explained with another place where Hashem got angry and the Torah uses the same **חרון אף** again. After the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem was very angry and decided to destroy the entire nation. Moshe Rabbeinu then tells Him **שוב** — to relent from His anger.

Another instance of Hashem having **חרון אף** was



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when Aharon and Miriam spoke about Moshe. Hashem rebuked them, got angry, and immediately left them. The result of Hashem leaving was that they were afflicted with tzaraat. This is because Hashem doesn't need to actively punish; rather, when He withdraws His providence from us, all the bad things come.

When Chazal tell us that as long as there are wicked people in the world there is חרון אף in the world, it is because the people in the world allow such people to exist and their cruel ideology to flourish. Thus, the people of the world are partially responsible for this cruelty. Therefore, Hashem can't dwell in such a world and He simply leaves, just as He left Miriam and Aharon when they spoke about Moshe, and then disasters come to the world. Thus, when the evil Haman of Persia of our generation is eliminated, the entire world benefits since Hashem's presence comes back. When Hashem comes back, good comes to the world, as the Gemara mentions (סוף סנהדרין).

Rabbi Yosi mentions another approach to what happens when Hashem gets angry. When Moshe didn't accept Hashem's mission to go to Pharaoh, Hashem got angry, which led Him to punish Moshe by changing the leadership roles. Instead of Moshe being the Kohen and

Aharon being the Levi, the roles were reversed, with Aharon becoming the Kohen and Moshe becoming the Levi. When we read those words, we might not fully understand the significance of who should be Kohen or Levi, and moreover, why it's a punishment for Moshe, who was totally uninterested in any role and was doing all he could to avoid it. But since it's a punishment, we must understand that it has negative implications, and that Klal Yisrael would have benefited much more if Moshe had been the Kohen.

Taking this idea to our time, we can conclude that according to Rabbi Yosi's opinion, when Hashem is angry, He changes leadership in the world. Having the wrong leader can have catastrophic implications, such as open borders, a bad economy, a rise in antisemitism, and wars in Israel and around the world. That is all part of the חרון אף. But when the wicked person is killed, then good comes to the world, and in this context, it can very likely be a change in leadership for the better.

Let's pray and hope that we'll soon experience what Zeresh said: when the enemies of Israel start to be defeated, then they are completely defeated.

THE COMPLEXITY OF HANDLING GARBAGE ON SHABBAT.

Some activities we engage in on Shabbat may seem innocent, but they're actually more complex than we realize. Surprisingly, handling garbage is one such activity. While it may appear harmless, it can actually involve several Shabbat violations, including tying, preparing for weekdays, and issues related to muktzeh.

Chazal established the concept of muktzeh, which restricts moving certain items on Shabbat. Muktzeh items are classified into several categories, with each having specific rules. Garbage typically falls under the category of "muktzeh machmat gufo," which refers to objects that have no inherent use and are not considered utensils or food.

Let's briefly revisit the laws of muktzeh to get a clearer understanding of where garbage falls.

Categories of Muktzeh:

Here are some key categories of muktzeh:

1. Muktzeh Machmat Gufo (Intrinsically Muktzeh):

- Items with no inherent use, such as stones, money, raw food that can't be eaten as is, and garbage.
- These items are generally not allowed to be moved at all on Shabbat.

2. Muktzeh Machmat Chisaron Kis (Valuable Items):

- Items that are valuable and therefore not used on Shabbat for fear of damage or loss, such as expensive tools or collectibles.
- These are also not allowed to be moved on Shabbat.

3. Kli She'Melachto L'Issur (Tools Used for Prohibited Activities):

- Tools whose primary use involves activities prohibited on Shabbat, like hammers or pens.
- These can be moved if needed for a permissible use (l'tzorech gufo) or if their place is needed (l'tzorech mekomo).

4. Muktzeh Machmat Mitzvah (Set Aside for a Mitzvah):

- Items designated for mitzvah purposes, such as a lulav or shofar, which may not be used for other purposes.

Dealing with Garbage on Shabbat:

While garbage is typically considered muktzeh machmat gufo, there are practical considerations and leniencies provided by the halacha:



- **Graf Shel Re'i:** If garbage creates a significant discomfort (e.g., it smells bad or is unsightly), it is permitted to move it out of the way. This is known as "graf shel re'i," a halachic provision that allows moving something that would otherwise be muktzeh because it causes a significant disturbance.

Now, let's get into the halacha of muktzeh in relation to garbage.

The halacha (שולחן ערוך סימן שח סעיף כט) distinguishes between trash that is edible for a person or even for animals if there are animals in town that will be able to

consume it, and garbage that isn't able to be consumed by anyone. Some (ראה ששי"כ פרק כ הערה צו) would also say that any food that was thrown into the garbage is already disgusting to the point that no one will eat it. Even disposable utensils such as plastic cups, forks, spoons, etc., that were thrown into the garbage are muktzeh, since no one, even a poor person in our time and age, will remove them to use them.

Therefore, while garbage is generally muktzeh machmat gufo, the discomfort it causes allows for certain leniencies, enabling its removal in a permissible manner on Shabbat.

There is another category, and that is the base that the muktzeh is on, which is relevant to our discussion since the garbage is in the can. The can itself, although it is a vessel, since it serves as the base for the garbage, is also muktzeh. This is called "basis l'davar ha'as-sur."

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Basis L'Davar Ha'assur (Base for a Prohibited Item):

- Objects that serve as a base for muktzeh items, like a table with money on it.

- If the muktzeh item was on the base at the beginning of Shabbat and the base was intentionally designated to hold it, the base also becomes muktzeh.

Therefore, since the garbage bin is designed for holding garbage, it becomes a basis—a base—for the muktzeh and may not be moved. Although a basis can only become muktzeh if it had garbage in it ben hashmashot (משנ"ב סימן רסו סעיף כו), here, since that is the purpose of the can, it becomes a basis even if garbage was placed in it on Shabbat. Thus, a garbage can may not be moved, and one can't bring the can from the kitchen to the dining room table to throw the garbage in it; rather, they must take the garbage from the dining room table to the can in the kitchen (הגרש"ז אורבך הובא בארחות שבת ח"ב עמוד קנה).

Thus, when the garbage bin is empty, its status is Kli She'Melachto L'Issur, and it can be moved only if needed elsewhere. However, once garbage is placed in it, it changes to become Muktzeh Machmat Gufo, and it cannot be moved at all. The garbage can cover may be lifted at any time, even if there is already garbage in the can, to throw garbage in it, since the cover is also considered Kli She'Melachto L'Issur (ארחות שבת ח"ב עמוד קעז).

When the garbage bag is full and one needs to change it, then it's considered graf shel re'i, especially if it smells bad, and one may take the bag out of the house if there is an eruv. They can replace it with

a new bag. While changing bags, a few cautions must be taken. One should not double tie the old bag as that is the melacha of קושר. One may not rip a new bag if it's attached to the other bags as this is the melacha of kore'a. Although some would not classify it as kore'a but other melachot such as makeh bepatish or metaken mana. Also, one may not take out the garbage or put in a new bag right before Shabbat ends, since it's considered preparing from Shabbat to weekday. If one's garbage is attached to a drawer and in order to throw in it one needs to open the drawer, there is a distinction between two types of drawers. One is where the garbage is attached to the drawer and it moves together with the garbage when you open it. In such a case, if it's used for other things as well, such as to store items, then the drawer is not primarily made for the garbage and thus one may open it. However, a drawer that has the sole use for garbage is muktzeh, since by opening it not only is the garbage moved with it, but also the drawer becomes part of that garbage bin. If the garbage isn't attached to the drawer, it is permitted to be opened, similar to what we explained before about the cover of the garbage can ראה (באריכות בארחות שבת ח"ב עמוד קנד).

The garbage bin, equipped with a foot-operated mechanism that opens the cover when pressed, is permitted for use, as explained earlier. Even though the garbage itself may naturally shift slightly while using this mechanism, the primary intention is to open the cover. Thus, when the bin itself opens, it is considered an indirect movement.

REJOICING AT THE DOWNFALL OF OUR ENEMIES:

When we experience a defeat of our enemy a question must be asked: are we allowed to feel happy when wicked terrorists get punished for their actions? The pasuk says: "בְּכַפֵּל אוֹיְבְּךָ אֶל תִּשְׂמַח וּבְכַנְשׁוֹ" "אֶל יָגֵל לְבָבְךָ" meaning that one should not rejoice at the failure of his enemy, and it continues: "פֶּן יִרְאֶה ה' וְרַע בְּעֵינָיו וְהָשִׁיב מַעֲלָיו אֵפֹן." The Mefarshim explain that the end of the pasuk goes so far as to say that Hashem gets so angry when we rejoice at the downfall of our enemies that He sometimes removes the punishment from the enemy and sends it upon the person rejoicing.

The Gemara (מגילה טז, א) actually deals with this question, explaining that when Mordechai was going up on the horse, he kicked the wicked Haman with his feet. Haman turned to Mordechai and asked him from the above pasuk, "Aren't you restricted from showing happiness while your enemies are suffering?" Mordechai then told him that there is a difference between a wicked Jew who gets punished, at which we shouldn't feel happy, and a wicked non-Jew who gets punished, where we are permitted to feel happy. The explanation is simple: when our brothers are being punished, even though they deserve it, we should still feel their pain. According to this approach, we can conclude that it's permitted to be happy at the death of those evil terrorists since they are not our brothers.

Still, there is another question that needs clarification: when the Egyptians chased the Jewish Nation at the sea, Hashem drowned them all in the ocean. Seeing the Egyptians dying, the angels wanted to sing praises, but Hashem stopped them, responding that it's not correct to do so when His creations are being destroyed (מגילה י.).

We see again the idea of holding back from expressing

happiness when our enemies are being punished.

But that is not always the case, since Chazal tell us that there are times one should feel happy upon seeing the wicked being punished, and it is then a positive thing to rejoice. The Gemara (ברכות ט, ב) explains that King David, who was constantly singing praises of Hashem with Tehilim, didn't use the praise of "Haleluya" until he was happy to see the downfall of the wicked. Another pasuk says that there is joy when the wicked are eliminated, and Sefer Chasidim (237) even says that one may be punished if he isn't happy when the wicked are lost.



A few approaches have been suggested to answer the above contradiction:

The Zohar (נח סא, ב) says that the difference is where one has been sinning over and over again. Hashem usually doesn't punish right away; rather, He waits for the person to repent and change his ways. If that doesn't happen, then there is a point at which Hashem decides that the person won't change his ways anymore and that He has waited long enough, and the person needs to be taken

down. At that time when Hashem punishes him, there is much happiness. In the case of the Egyptians, says the Zohar, they didn't reach that point yet, and therefore Hashem wasn't happy with their death. This answer doesn't really relate to us because we don't have a way to know if and when a person has reached the point that Hashem gives up on him. Only Hashem knows this and therefore He told the angels not to sing. Still we, as a nation, are allowed to sing when we are saved from those evil Arabs.

Some say that the prohibition to sing and rejoice is only while the wicked are being punished. At that very time, Hashem is sad to

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see His creations die, but after they were punished one may express his happiness (Rosh David, Parashat Beshalach 54 and Iyun Yaakov, Berakhot 9). This explains well the reason Hashem prevented the angels from singing, because they asked to sing while the Egyptians were drowning. Afterward, it was surely permitted, as we see that Moshe and the nation sang Shirat HaYam. According to this answer, we may rejoice after we hear that those terrorists were taken down.

Another answer is that the angels were not allowed to sing as they were not the ones who were being saved from the Egyptians. But the people, who were chased to be killed or to be taken back to slavery, were allowed to sing and Moshe and the nation indeed did so.

This answer can teach that with the current event, the Jewish people, who were saved from the Jihadists, are permitted to express their happiness.

One can surely make a distinction between one's enemy who isn't wicked, in which case one shouldn't rejoice upon their downfall, and the wicked who are the enemies of Hashem or Klal Israel. In those cases, we can be happy and express our happiness.

There are a few more answers to the above, but overall we learn that it's correct and even expected of us to rejoice at the destruction of those evil murderers.

BEYOND AUTHORITY: THE ART OF EMPOWERING OTHERS

At a rabbinical convention attended by esteemed scholars from previous generations, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman repeatedly asked the Chazon Ish to share words of Torah. Despite the insistence, the Chazon Ish declined. Rabbi Wasserman, believing he wasn't violating the prohibition of "you shall not rule ruthlessly over the other," persisted in his requests. When he assured the Chazon Ish that his request wasn't violating this prohibition, the Chazon Ish expressed uncertainty, prompting Rabbi Wasserman to immediately cease his entreaties and seek forgiveness (story told by Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch שו"ת (תשובות והנהגות ח"א).

There is a mitzva mentioned in our parasha (Behar) which, at first reading, may seem irrelevant in our time. However, further learning will show that it is very relevant to each one of us and there is much to be learned from it. The pasuk says: "No one shall rule ruthlessly over the other" (ויקרא כה, מו), meaning we should not rule over the slave with rigor.

Chazal explain that this mitzvah pertains to how a slave owner should treat his Jewish slave. They write that he should not force him to do useless work with the sole purpose of vexing him. For example, do not say to him, "Warm me this cup of drink" when this is unnecessary; nor, "Hoe beneath this vine tree until I come back," without specifying when you will return.

Now, since there is no slavery today, it seems like this is a mitzva from the past which isn't relevant anymore.

Let's delve into the explanation of Rabbenu Yonah and appreciate the depth of the Torah, contrasting it with our accustomed superficial learning. Rabbenu Yonah writes (שערי תשובה פרק ג אות ס): "The pasuk in the Torah says:] "But as for your brothers of the Children of Israel, no one shall rule ruthlessly over the other" - A man may not subjugate his fellow. If others fear him or are embarrassed to disobey his word, he should not command them to do anything at all, except from their own will and for their benefit—even to heat up

a jug of water or run an errand to the town square to buy as little as a loaf of bread. However, it is permitted to command anything he wants to a person who does not behave properly".

According to the words of Rabbeinu Yonah, one violates this prohibition merely by asking another to do something for him if the other person is reluctant to refuse due to fear, embarrassment, or any other reason. For example, if you've done someone a favor and now you want to ask him for a favor in return, knowing he won't be able to say no even if it's hard for him because he feels obligated to return the favor. What happens then is something interesting that needs to be explained. When one loses his ability to refuse for any reason, he is likened to a slave who doesn't have the ability to refuse his master's command.

Rabbenu Yona's interpretation underscores the essence of compassionate leadership, emphasizing the importance of treating others with dignity and respect. He cautions against using authority to coerce or intimidate, instead advocating for a leadership style rooted in empathy and mutual benefit. By empowering others to act according to their own will and for their own welfare, true leadership fosters a sense of autonomy and cooperation. However, Rabbenu Yona also acknowledges the necessity of holding individuals accountable for their actions, recognizing that proper behavior is essential for a harmonious community.



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