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מרחשון תשפ"א

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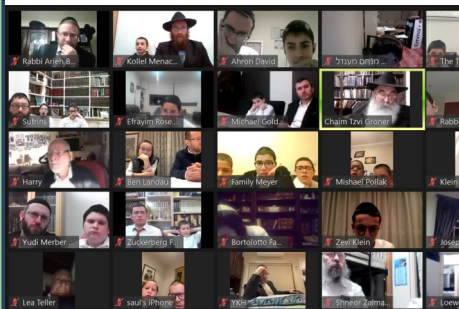
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RETIRES SHIUR

The daily retirees shiurim will be resuming again. Join Rabbi Szmerling for a Gemara shiur. Followed by Rabbi Mendel Gurkov on Sefer Hachinuch. Monday-Thursday 10:00am.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush



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Saving the spark of Moshiach

An entire chapter of this week's Parsha is devoted to an episode known as The War of the Kings. The Torah describes how an alliance of four kings, led by Amrafel, conquered five other nations in battle, taking their residents as captives.

One of the cities conquered was Sodom, where Avraham's nephew Lot had taken up residence on parting with uncle.

Avraham, alerted to the fact that his nephew had been captured, armed himself and set out in pursuit. Miraculously Avraham defeated the four kings, freeing his nephew and restoring him to his home.

This seemingly trivial story has a deeper dimension and can teach us a powerful lesson.

The posuk in Tehillim says **מצאתי דוד עבדי**, "I found My servant Dovid". The Midrash on this Posuk poses and answers a question; "Where did I find him (Dovid)? In Sodom". What does it mean that Hashem found Dovid in Sodom?

The Midrash is referring to Lot. Lot would later father Moav. Rus, the great-grandmother of Dovid Hamelech was a descendant of Moav. In Lot, in Sodom, Hashem had planted the seeds of the lineage of Dovid.

Dovid is also used as a reference to Moshiach, a king who will arise from the House of Dovid. In Kabbalistic thought, the spark (nitzutz) of Moshiach rested within Lot. It was this soul that Amrafel sought to capture in battle. This is also the soul that the king of Sodom referred to when he said to Avraham **תן לי הנפש**, Give me the soul (written in singular form), the unique soul of Moshiach.

Rashi observes that it was Lot's choice to live in Sdom that caused him to be captured. Lot had grown up in the tent of Avraham. Yet he chose to abandon Avraham and the way of life that he espoused. Lot chose to settle in Sdom, with full knowledge of who its inhabitants were.

Avraham puts his own life at risk to save Lot; As lowly as he may be, despite his conscious decision to veer from the path of Avraham which ultimately put him at risk, nonetheless inside of him was a spark of Moshiach that had to be saved.

We live a time where many of our fellow Jews are like Lot, finding themselves far away from the tent and way of life of Avraham Avinu, spiritually distant from their roots. They may find themselves in Sodom and may have chosen to settle there intentionally.

How do we respond?

Every Jew possess a Neshama. The essence of every Neshama is the spark of Moshiach. It may be stuck in Sodom, hidden under layers of concealment, but it remains pure and complete. Every Jew is our brother or sister and we cannot sit idly by, content with our own Torah observance while they remain in spiritual captivity.

Our forefather Avraham risked his life to save Lot. In doing so, Avraham instilled within his descendants the moral-calling, the strength and the self-sacrifice to give up of ourselves, physically and spiritually, to try to reveal that spark within others.

This is the vision of the Rebbe and his call to each of us in our times; To see and sense how every Jew is precious, carrying a spark of Moshiach's soul, the Pintele Yid. And to do whatever we can to help reveal that soul within them and bring them back to a positive engagement and observance of Yiddishkeit.

Through our efforts to restore the individual sparks of the soul of Moshiach, we will be zoche to the revelation of the complete Neshama of Moshiach the collective soul of all of the Jewish people. Then, all of the sparks will be drawn back to their source, back home to the tent of Avraham where they rightfully belong.

The weekly Halacha analysis

Halachos for travelling - Part 1

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Parshas Lecha Lecha begins with Avraham's journey to Eretz Yisroel. Below we share a compendium of Halachos pertaining to travel.

When to travel

The Gemora¹ says that one should ensure to start one's journey while it is still light and also to enter into the city while still light. Though essentially a safety issue, it is brought as halacha by the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch² and Mishna Berura³. Mishna Berura explains that one should set out after sunrise (Neitz Hachama) and arrive before Shkiya (sunset).

The reason is that if one is unfamiliar with the roads and cannot see well, they may fall into a pit or other obstacle. Therefore, if one is near their home in terrain that they are familiar with, they may travel at night⁴.

(Pele Yoetz⁵ offers another reason for this Halacha. By leaving after sunrise and arriving before sunset, they will be able to daven properly at their place of origin or destination).

Nowadays, with safer roads and vehicles this ruling does not generally apply. But it gives us an appreciation of the need to act safely when travelling and to avoid dangerous areas.

A similar halacha is that one should not travel alone at night outside of the city⁶. Again due to changed travel conditions, the practise is to be lenient, but one should always take the necessary safety precautions.

On Erev Shabbos the Shulchan Aruch rules that one should not travel a trip of more than (approximately) 4 hours. This is in order to have adequate time to prepare for Shabbos. However, if one is already prepared or someone else will be taking care of the preparations, this ruling does not apply.

Nonetheless, when travelling on Erev Shabbos (including day trips) one should leave enough time to reach their destination, allowing extra time for unforeseeable delays or traffic.

Before travelling

It is customary before leaving on a journey to seek a Bracha and take leave from the Gedolei HaIr⁷. It is also a good practise to give Tzedaka before setting out on a journey⁸. This is alluded to in the Posuk – וְיָדֹק לְפָנָיו יְהוָה וְיֵשֶׁם לְדִרְךָ פְּעֻמָּיו "Justice goes before Him as He sets out on His way"⁹.

The Rebbe¹⁰ encouraged placing a Tzedakah Pushka in one's car as well as a Siddur, Tehillim

and Tanya as a source of protection against accidents. The Rebbe said that this should be publicised.

What to take with you

Mishna Berura¹¹ and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch¹² writes that one should take bread (food) with them on every journey, even if they are travelling to a nearby place, since one may end up being delayed. Elya Rabbah adds that one should also take water. The Acharonim write that nowadays food is readily available along the way and this halacha will generally not be applicable¹³.

One should also take their Tallis and Tefillin¹⁴ even when travelling to a nearby place and they intend to return that day¹⁵. There is a concern that they may be delayed overnight and be stuck without Tallis and Tefillin. The Kitzur also writes that one should bring spare Tzitzis in case their Tzitzis break and they will be stuck without Kosher Tzitzis.

Again, the Acharonim write that travel conditions have changed and one need not bring their Tallis and Tefillin with them. However, it depends on the nature of each trip and the likelihood of being stuck. Based on the Maharal, there is a segulah for success in one's journey to take their Tallis and Tefillin with them.

One should also take a Siddur and Seforim to learn with¹⁶.

Road safety

Safety when travelling is not just good advice, it is also mandated by the Torah; וּנְשַׁמְרֶתֶם מָדָד לְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם "you should be very careful with guarding your life"¹⁷.

On the road, this would include following all road signs and regulations, including speed limits. It also includes the proper use of seatbelts and child safety restraints. One should also be conscious of driver's fatigue, taking adequate rest breaks, especially when driving late at night or early morning¹⁸.

Nowadays, the requirement of being safe while travelling would include having a map or GPS as well as a working mobile phone.

Spiritual safety

Pele Yoetz¹⁹ writes that since a journey is a time of danger, one needs to be more careful with Mitzvos. Even though it is difficult to do while travelling, they should be careful with lesser prohibitions just as they would severe prohibi-

tions and should act in a way of Middas Chasidus.

Chaza"l teach that emissaries of a Mitzvah will not suffer harm. Based on this, Kaf Hachaim²⁰ writes that one should ask someone else to make them a Shliach Mitzvah by giving them Tzedaka to distribute at their destination. If one does not receive Shliach Mitzvah money, they can set aside their own money and have in mind to give it as Tzedaka at their destination.

Travelling before davening

The Shulchan Aruch²¹ rules that one is not allowed to begin a journey before having davened in the morning. The Ram"o brings a lenient opinion which permits travel after having recited some Brachos. However, he rules that it is preferable to be stringent.

Most Poskim understand this law to apply only when leaving after the time of Shachris (Alos Hashachar) has arrived.

If one is travelling after Midday, they should first daven Mincha before setting out²².

The Shulchan Aruch makes an exception if one is travelling in a convoy which will not wait for him to daven first.

If one is in a place where there is no minyan and they are travelling to a place where there will be a minyan which davens before the zman, one may travel before davening²³.

If there is a pressing need to leave before davening or it will cause great delay (e.g. to avoid traffic) or extra cost, one can rely on the lenient opinion and leave after reciting Brachos. If the purpose of the travel is for the sake of a Mitzvah one need not delay.

1. Pesachim 2a, Taanis 10b and Bava Kamma 60b

2. OC 110:9

3. OC 110:28, see also Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 68:6

4. Shulchan Aruch Harav 110:9 and Mishna Berura 110:28.

5. 59

6. Shulchan Aruch Harav ibid

7. Shulcha Aruch Harav 110:9 based on Elya Zuta 5. See also Mishna Berura ibid.

8. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch ibid.

9. Tehillim 85:14

10. See Yagdil Torah Teshuvos ubiurim on Shulchan Aruch 38

11. 110:20 based on Chayei Adam

64:5

12. 110:15 and Kaf Hachaim 110:23

13. One should carry money with them in case they need to buy food

14. The Rebbe told Rabbi Leibel

15. The Rebbe told Rabbi Leibel

Kaplan that when packing for a journey, he should first pack his Tallis and Tefillin. Even if one needs to use them before travelling, they can take them out afterwards. But the Tallis and Tefillin should be the first items packed.

15. Mishna Berura ibid

16. Aruch Hashulchan 110:15

17. Devarim 4:15

18. The Rebbe instructed that when driving at night one should stop each hour or take shifts with another driver and rest in between.

19. 59

20. 110:27

21. OC 89:3

22. Pele Yoetz 59

23. Shevet Halevi 8:19