



פרשת ויגש
טבת תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל



HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA

In Parshas Vayigash we read about the great family reunion as Yaakov comes down to Mitzrayim with his family to join Yosef.

The Torah describes how Yaakov came down with his sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters.

This is similar to Hakhel which was a unity gathering of all of the Jewish people; men, women and children - both boys and girls.

YARCHEI KALLAH UPDATE

This year's Yarchei Kallah program began with a bang. Starting on Tuesday, each day of the program has attracted a consistently large crowd of eager participants.

Our very talented guest speaker, Rabbi Dinerman has given amazing high-quality Shiurim which have been very well received.

The Kollel Rabbis have delivered topical Shiurim on a variety of topics, together with Shiurim by Rabbi Yossi Gordon, Rabbi Leor Broh and Rabbi Yonason Johnson.

The program continues on Sunday and Monday this coming week and we encourage everyone to attend and participate.

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A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem



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A Mantra to Overcome Inadequacy

Who do you think you are? You know who you are, you know how lowly you are and all the sins that you have done. Do you think you are worthy of coming before Hashem to pray to Him? Do you think He will listen to your prayers?

Many of us struggle with thoughts like these that plague our minds when we come to Daven or connect to Hashem in other ways. They leave us feeling ashamed and unworthy. They may put us off entirely from Davening or engaging in spiritual growth.

How do we overcome these thoughts, especially when we are acutely aware of the truth of our shortcomings and deficiencies?

At the beginning of Parshas Vayigash, Yehudah approaches Yosef and asks "please my master, let your servant please speak in the ears of my master".

This is a continuation to the conclusion of last week's Parsha. After finding his silver goblet that had been planted in Binyomin's sack, Yosef accosts the brothers. Yehudah cries out "what can we say to my master? What can we say and what can we do to justify ourselves. G-d has found the sin of your servants."

Every part of Torah, even its stories, are living lessons to us in our personal service of Hashem.

Our sages teach that the word Vayigash "and he approached" - is used in different contexts. One of them is to approach Hashem in prayer. Therefore, we can read this Parsha as a metaphor for prayer and glean personal insight and lessons for when we approach Hashem.

Throughout the discourse, Yehudah refers to Yosef as Adoni "my master". This word has the same letters as the Divine Name אדני, the Master of the world. Yehudah refers to himself as "your servant", reflecting the humility and subservience with which we come before our Heavenly Master.

Like Yehudah's words at the end of last week's Parsha, we question ourselves "what can we say?" i.e. how can we speak in prayer? "How can we justify ourselves?". We reflect on our sins, our baggage, our guilt and shame as "Hashem has found our sins" and knows very well who we are.

The truth is that these thoughts of inferiority, lowliness and being unworthy, are nothing more than the voice of the Yetzer Hora, seeking to prevent us from drawing close and connecting to Hashem.

Our response to these voices and negative self-talk can be found in Yehudah's words at the beginning of this week's Parsha. Yehudah's words בִּי אֲדֹנָי, "please my master", can also be read as "in me is Adon-ai". In this context, Yehudah is not addressing Yosef, but is talking to himself;

Inside of me is a pure soul which is a part of Hashem Himself. This is who I am and what defines me. I may have sinned and may seem distant from Hashem, but my soul, my essential self that lies within me is Adon-ai, a spark of G-d. This is my absolute, eternal and infinite value and no one and nothing can take this away from me.

With this realisation, Yehudah concludes "let me speak in the ears of Adon-ai"; Because I am a pure soul, I am worthy and I can speak to Hashem. My prayers are meaningful and precious and Hashem wants to hear them.

Guilt, shame and sadness are the tools of the Yetzer Hora. Guilt for our sins may present as piety, honesty and humility, but it is nothing more than the Yetzer Hora trying to stop us from connecting to Hashem, by making us feel low and bad about ourselves.

After enticing us to sin, the Yetzer Hora then comes to make us guilty and depressed about what we have done and how bad we are. We buy into this narrative and start to see ourselves as unworthy of serving Hashem. The Baal Shem Tov taught, that this second sin (feeling unworthy) is even worse than the initial one.

When we struggle with feelings of lowliness, questioning our value and self-worth, we should reflect on the simple two-word mantra בִּי אֲדֹנָי, "G-d is within me". Like Yehudah, we can then approach any challenge or pursuit, from a place of strength and confidence.

~ Based on the writings of the Tiferes Shlomo

The weekly Halacha analysis

Torah and Tefillah when Travelling

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Spiritual safety

Pele Yoetz¹ 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 prohibitions and should act in a way of Middas Chassidus.

Chaza"l teach that emissaries of a Mitzvah will not suffer harm. Based on this, Kaf Hachaim² 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.

Before leaving, it is a good practise for one to 'take leave' of the Gedolim in the city, in order to receive their blessing before travelling³.

Words of Torah

The Alter Rebbe⁴ rules that when travelling, once should speak words of Torah, as it says in the Shema "ובלכתך בדרך... ובדברת במ... and you shall speak them (Torah)... when you go on the way". The Gemara⁵ teaches that if two people travel together and do not speak words of Torah, they deserve to be burned.

Pirkei Avos⁶ teaches that one who travels and turns his heart to idle matters (as opposed to thinking words of Torah), is liable for their life⁷.

The Shela"h writes that it was the practise of Chassidim and Anshei Maaseh to have a Mesechta or Mishnayos to review by heart while travelling.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch⁸ writes that one should say a few chapters of Tehillim each day while travelling, with Kavanah and a sense of submission to Hashem.

The words of Torah accompany a person and provide protection on a journey, which is considered to be a time of danger⁹.

Nonetheless, not all Torah study is appropriate when travelling. If one is walking they should not learn or discuss something which requires in-depth thought and study, lest they lose

focus on the road and get lost. The same would apply to a driver. Passengers travelling in a wagon may learn in depth¹⁰. The same would apply to passengers in a car or other vehicle.

The Talmud¹¹ teaches that this was the directive of Yosef to his brothers before he sent them back on to Eretz Yisroel to bring their father Yaakov; – אל תרגזו בדרך "do not quarrel on the way". Rashi quotes the Talmud that Yosef told them "do not engage in a halachic discussion lest the way cause you to stray".

Travelling Before Davening

The Shulchan Aruch¹² 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 out¹³.

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 davening¹⁴.

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.

Davening on the Way.

If one needs to daven while travelling, the following halachos apply;

Be aware of the proper times for davening.

One should wash their hands and dress appropriately as per usual for davening.

If one needs to wash their hands and no water is available, they must travel up to 72 minutes in order to obtain water to wash before Davening. If one needs to travel out of their way in order to

obtain water, they only need to travel 18 minutes¹⁵.

If water will not be available within this distance of travel, or if waiting to obtain water will cause one to miss the Zman of Davening, they can suffice by wiping their hands on something that will clean them, such as a stone or beam.

The above only applies if one knows that their hands were soiled or touched something dirty. If a person is not aware of any dirt on his hands, whilst they must wash before Davening, they need not travel further to obtain water and can rely on wiping their hands¹⁶.

Today with the various Phone apps, one can find a compass with which to determine the direction to face when davening. If one does not know the direction one should have kavanah in their heart to be davening directly to Hashem.

One should preferably stop their travelling and stand for davening (Shemoneh Esrei).

It is preferable not to daven (Shemoneh Esrei) in an open area. Rather one should daven in or near a building or near trees or in a secluded area.

When travelling by train the Rebbe Rashab would stand, when traveling by carriage the Rebbe would sit while davening. The primary issue is being able to have proper kavanah.

When davening Shemoneh Esrei while sitting, one should have the legs placed together. If possible one should rise when bowing during Shemoneh Esrei. One should also still take 3 steps back at the end of Shemoneh Esrei.

- 59
- 110:27
- Elya Zuta 110:5 in the name of the Maharam
- 110:9 based on Taanis 10a
- Taanis 10b
- 3:4
- Mishna Berura 110:20
- 68:6. See Birkei Yosef 110:3
- Yefeh Toar on Midrash Rabbah
- Magen Avraham 10, Shulchan Aruch Harav 110:9
- Taanis 10b
- OC 89:3
- Pele Yoetz 59
- Shevet Halevi 8:19
- Shulchan Aruch Harav 92:4
- Shulchan Aruch Harav 92:5