



פרשת לך לך  
מרחשון תשע"ז

### GALA EVENING

We are very excited for our upcoming Partners in Torah gala evening; a tribute to the Rebbe and support of our Kollel with guest speaker Rabbi Leibel Groner.

All men and women are invited  
Join us on Thursday February 2,  
2017 at the Brighton International  
(separate seating).

**Book your tickets now!**  
**Trybooking.com/NENC**

### EARLY SHABBOS SHIUR

Each week on Shabbos after-  
noons, Rabbi Michael Stern gives  
a popular Hilchos Shabbos shiur.  
In honour of the worldwide Shab-  
bos Project, this week's shiur will  
be a one-off topical shiur on  
**Issues of Kabbolas Shabbos  
and bringing in Shabbos early.**  
5:30-6:30pm in the Kollel for men.

### WOMEN'S HALACHA

This long-running shiur is a great  
way to start your week.  
All ladies are invited to join us for  
the Monday morning Halacha  
shiur. This term we are learning  
the Halachos of  
**Medications and treating illness  
and injury on Shabbos.**  
10:00am at the home of Naomi  
Cohen, 11 Sidwell Ave.  
Babies and toddler are welcome.  
Refreshments are served and toys  
are provided.

### AVOS UBONIM SUMMER

Avos Ubonim will take place this  
week on Shabbos afternoon at  
6:30pm in the Mezzanine.

A collection of Torah  
thoughts produced by  
Kollel Menachem

בס"ד  
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.

# Show Some Respect - honouring the Sefer Torah

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In last week's Chiddush we raised the issue of honouring the Sefer Torah. This week we present a selection of other halachos and widespread Minhogim which are observed in order to show honour to the Sefer Torah.

The Shulchan Aruch, Laws of honouring the Sefer Torah<sup>1</sup>, begins by quoting from the Rambam<sup>2</sup>; "A person is obligated to display great honour towards the Sefer Torah. It is a Mitzvah to designate a place for it (the Torah) and to honour and beautify this place... each person should honour it as best as they can."

The first *seif* of the Shulchan Aruch lists; One should not spit in the presence of the Sefer Torah. One may also not be in the presence of the Sefer Torah when immodestly dressed.

Additionally, one should not turn their back towards the Sefer Torah. When reciting the Haftorah one should not stand with their back to the Sefer Torah but should rather stand to the side.

The Acharonim permit a Rov to stand during his *Drosha* with his back to the Aron Kodesh. This is because the Aron Kodesh constitutes a separate Reshus and therefore it is not in the presence of the Sefer Torah<sup>3</sup>.

## Standing for the Torah

One who sees the Sefer Torah being carried must stand before it. They should remain standing until the Sefer Torah comes to its place – either the Aron Kodesh or Bimah etc. – or is no longer within eyesight<sup>4</sup>. Even one who is learning Torah is obligated to stand<sup>5</sup>. If one is walking, they should stand stationary in their place until the Sefer Torah is no longer in eyesight<sup>6</sup>.

The Ram"o<sup>7</sup> brings a stringent custom to stand upon hearing the Sefer Torah approaching, even before it is visible, for example in hearing the bells<sup>8</sup> atop or on the mantel of the Sefer Torah. The custom of placing bells on the Sefer Torah is recorded in the Beis Yosef quoting Rabbeinu Manoach. However Rabbeinu Manoach and many Acharonim write that this custom is problematic because on Shabbos and Yomtov because of *Hashmaas Kol*—making noise.

When one is required to stand, they may not support themselves on a Shtender and the like in a way that if the Shtender was removed they would fall<sup>9</sup>.

Aruch Hashulchan records the universal custom of standing when the Aron Hakodesh is opened. This is not a halachic requirement as

the Sifrei Torah are stationary and in a separate Reshus. Nonetheless, since it has become accepted to stand, to not stand would be a lack of respect to the Sifrei Torah. One who is obviously weak need not stand.

## Carrying and Escorting the Torah

The Sefer Torah should be carried in one's right hand<sup>10</sup>. This is a sign of love for the Torah as the Posuk says "and his right hand embraces me". Further, the Torah is described as being given by Hashem's "right hand"<sup>11</sup>. The Torah should also be removed from the Aron Hakodesh with one's right hand, using the left hand to support it. The person doing *Pesicha* should pass the Sefer Torah to the right hand of the Chazzan<sup>12</sup>.

Based on the Pesukim above, a left-handed person should also carry the Sefer Torah with their right hand<sup>13</sup> unless their right hand is not strong enough to support it.

Shaarei Efraim<sup>14</sup> writes that it is the custom that people draw themselves closer to see the Sefer Torah. Even those who were standing in the courtyard would run into the Shule to see the Sefer Torah so that it should be in a manner of *Rov Am*. The one who does *Pesicha* should follow the Sefer Torah all the way to the Bimah<sup>15</sup>.

It is a Mitzvah for those who the Sefer Torah passes, to escort the Sefer Torah back to the Aron Kodesh<sup>16</sup>. The custom is to escort the Sefer Torah a few steps<sup>17</sup>.

It is customary, for those who are close enough, to kiss the Sefer Torah with their mouth and to embrace the Sefer Torah with their right hand. If one cannot reach the Sefer Torah to kiss with their mouth<sup>18</sup>, they should kiss the Sefer Torah using their hand<sup>19</sup>. Others write that one should not use their hand to kiss the Sefer Torah<sup>20</sup>.

The Chazzan should not go around to take the Torah to people to kiss. Rather they should come to the Sefer Torah to kiss it<sup>21</sup>.

## Aliyah to the Torah

One who is called up for an *Aliyah* should wear a Tallis as a sign of respect for the Torah.

When called up for an *Aliyah* one should go up to the Bimah using the shortest path<sup>22</sup>. One reason for this is to show honour to the Sefer Torah that one is "racing" to the Torah<sup>23</sup>. After the *Aliyah*, when returning to their seat they should take a longer path. This is also as a sign of respect to the Sefer Torah so that it appear that it is "hard" for one to leave the Torah<sup>24</sup>.

After having an *Aliyah*, the *Oleh* should remain on the Bimah until the next *Oleh* comes up<sup>25</sup>.

This is done out of honour for the Sefer Torah, so that it is not left unattended<sup>26</sup>. The custom is to remain until the next *Oleh* has recited the Brocha. However, since walking back to one's seat after the Brocha may make it difficult to follow the *leining*, the custom is to remain at the Bimah until the end of the next *Aliyah*<sup>27</sup>.

## Hagbah

The congregation should stand during *Hagbah*<sup>28</sup> from when the Torah is lifted until it is seated.

When doing *Hagbah*, the lifter should not turn the Torah outwards so that writing is on the other side<sup>29</sup>. This should not be done as part of Simchas Torah festivities either.

In many communities after doing Hagbah, the Sefer Torah is given to someone else to hold during the Haftorah. The Sefer Torah should not be given to a child to hold as this is a slight to its honour<sup>30</sup>.

Some Shules stand the Torah in special "seats" in the corners of the Bimah during the Haftorah. The Poskim argue whether "sitting" the Torah in such a stand is disrespectful or not<sup>31</sup>. It is certainly preferable for the Sefer Torah to be held.

<sup>1</sup> Yoreh Deah 282:1

<sup>2</sup> End of Hilchos Sefer Torah

<sup>3</sup> Ta"z YD 282:1. See also Aruch Hashulchan 282:2 that the Torah itself requires Rabbonim to instruct the people in the ways of Torah. This must be done face to face and therefore the Torah is honoured.

<sup>4</sup> Yoreh Deah 282:2

<sup>5</sup> Pischei Teshuva 282:3 quoting Yad Eliyahu Siman 4.

<sup>6</sup> Aruch Hashulchan 282:3

<sup>7</sup> Yoreh Deah 282:2

<sup>8</sup> Shach 4

<sup>9</sup> Mishna Berura 146

<sup>10</sup> Ram"o Orach Chaim 134:2

<sup>11</sup> Mishna Berura 134:14

<sup>12</sup> Shaarei Efraim 10:2

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Additionally not all of the congregants are aware that the Chazzan is left-handed and will look like an affront to the Torah.

<sup>14</sup> 10:4

<sup>15</sup> Shaarei Efraim 10:4

<sup>16</sup> Orach Chaim 149

<sup>17</sup> Chida

<sup>18</sup> Shaarei Efraim ibid. This was the custom of the Ariza"l

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. See Kitzur Shela"h

<sup>20</sup> Avodas Hatamid quoted in Shaarei Rachamim

<sup>21</sup> Shu"t Riva"m 359. He adds that it is the responsibility of the Rabbonim to ensure that this is done.

<sup>22</sup> Shulchan Aruch OC 141:7

<sup>23</sup> Mishna Berura 141:22

<sup>24</sup> Shulchan Aruch ibid and Mishna Berura ibid

<sup>25</sup> Shaarei Efraim 10:16

<sup>26</sup> Ram"o OC 141:1

<sup>27</sup> Levush OC 141

<sup>28</sup> Shaarei Efraim 10:18

<sup>29</sup> Mishna Berura 141:26

<sup>30</sup> Shaarei Efraim 10:6. He adds that at least it should be given to a youngster who is a Ben Daas.

<sup>31</sup> Minchas Yitzchok 2:117 permits their use. Igros Moshe 1:38 forbids it.