

דבר אל-בני ישראל, ואמרת אלם,
כי תבאו אל-הארץ, אשר אני נתן לכם
ושבתה הארץ, שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

7TH TEVET 5779

14TH/15TH DECEMBER 2018



Please continue to daven for the refuah and strength of Yeshaya Noson ben Shira Gittel



KINDNESS THROUGH COMMUNISM

KOBI WEINER
SHEVET NE'EMAN

A sometimes overlooked passage at the end of Parashat Vayigash tells us in great detail about the economic planning Yosef undertook during the famine. As he had predicted from Pharaoh's dreams, "Now there was no bread in all the world, for the famine was very severe" (Bereshit 47:13), and since only Egypt had experienced the years of plenty beforehand, the rest of the world was relying on the stockpiles of grain in Egypt. Therefore the people first complain to Yosef that there is no food, then later offer themselves as serfs to Pharaoh as long as they will be guaranteed food. Thus begins Yosef's great experiment of Egyptian Communism, buying up first the livestock, then all the land in Egypt for the state, before redistributing the population according to economic need, and rationing food to the population. (This extreme rationing was studied by the official in charge of rationing in WW1 Germany, who wrote an essay on Yosef's economic policy!)

The question on this posed by the Akedat Yitzchak is simple: why do we need to know all this? What does the Torah want to teach us through the details of how Egypt survived the famine? The answer comes in the one group exempt from the austerity measures: "Only the land of the priests he did not take over, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh" (ibid. 47:22). While most Egyptians suffered, the priestly elites, through favour from Pharaoh, continued to own land. Compare this to the economic model proposed by the Torah, where the Levi'im are specifically not given any land in Israel. For us, the priestly class cannot use their status to enrich themselves off the state, but are purposely made to live off the contributions of the people. Perhaps the Torah brings this passage to illustrate the fairness of the Torah's treatment of its elites compared to other cultures.

Another question therefore arises - if this economic

model was so cruel, how can we venerate its architect, Yosef, and give him such a complimentary epithet as 'HaTzaddik'? The righteous nature of Yosef can be seen through a closer look at the way he managed the rationing regime.

Firstly, we can look at the difference in the request from the Egyptian people to be enserfed and Yosef's response. Though the people beg "Take us and our land in exchange for bread, and we with our land will be serfs to Pharaoh", Yosef "gained possession of all the farmland of Egypt for Pharaoh" (ibid. 47:19-20). Ramban notes that while the people were willing to be personally owned, Yosef is only willing to buy their land. Whereas for Egyptians slavery is seen as normal, Yosef is not willing to take away people's most basic freedom. We see this distinction later, when the first Pharaoh who "did not know Yosef" (Shemot 1:8) enslaved the Hebrews.

Yosef is similarly compassionate when redistributing the population. Although the purpose was that people should live and work where they have the most economic potential, it saying "And he removed the population town by town" (Bereshit 47:21), which Ha'amek Davar suggests means that the population of each town was kept together, so that people would stay within their social groups. This small kindness would have made a time of suffering and upheaval that bit easier for the Egyptian people.

Even when the economic situation looks dire, the Torah teaches us here that we must continue to treat all people with basic kindness and humanity.

KOBI WAS THE HEAD COOK ON BET BASE MACHANE AND A MADRICH ON HAROEH AND GIMMEL WINTER MACHANE 5778

London	In: 15:33	Out: 16:41	Oxford	In: 15:36	Out: 16:44	Cambridge	In: 15:29	Out: 16:38
Manchester	In: 15:31	Out: 16:39	Bristol	In: 15:43	Out: 16:51	Liverpool	In: 15:34	Out: 16:42
Leeds	In: 15:26	Out: 16:34	Birmingham	In: 15:35	Out: 16:43	Jerusalem	In: 15:56	Out: 17:26

SELF-REFLECTION IN THE MODERN DAY: HUMILITY, SELF-ESTEEM, AND ARROGANCE

RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH



This piece is the fifth in a series on self-reflection in the modern day, based on the book "Musar for Moderns" by Rav Elyakim Krumbein

Last week we discussed the definition of humility, and how instead of it being a feeling of nothingness and inability, it is actually closer to a sense of self-esteem grounded in the framework of serving Hashem and realising it is all a gift from Him.

This week we'll discuss more at length the danger of "false humility". As mentioned last week, people tend to define humility as a keen awareness of one's shortcomings. While this is undoubtedly important, as it allows us to work on improving ourselves, it becomes a false humility when this is then used as justification for inaction.

I remember a scene from the Simpsons, in which a nefarious hybrid between tomato and tobacco has been created, with the dangerously addictive new "tomacco" about to run rampant on the population. Realising the danger inherent in this new breed, Homer holds the **only** existing plant in his hands. Lisa, his daughter, tries to convince him to destroy it, thus ending the danger immediately. But he responds, "I wish I could make a difference, Lisa, but **I'm just one man.**" This false humility prevents him from realising that he actually could make all of the difference in the world.

I think that the danger in this false humility comes to be expressed in two areas: a denial of the actual abilities that we possess, as well as a misreading of the effects that our actions can have.

Many of us tend to downplay our own abilities, both to ourselves and others. We think "I can't do that! That's for someone else who's more comfortable speaking in front of others/who's a better leader/who's nicer/who's more serious etc. etc." We

think that if we try it, we may fail spectacularly, causing a more negative reaction than our inaction would have brought. Although there are definitely situations where this reticence is justifiable, all too often it pushes us to think that someone else is better suited. We must remember the words of Chazal (Pirkei Avot 2:16): "לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ולא אתה בן 'חורין להבטל ממנו", that the entirety of work is not upon you to complete, but neither are you free to exempt yourself from it. We must continually challenge ourselves, examining our motives to think if our decision to refrain from the numerous opportunities we are presented with to improve ourselves and our communities actually stem from truth or a fear of failure.

Secondly, even if we believe in our abilities, we may think that our actions won't make much of a difference. For example, "Why should I work so hard on this learning event,

on putting together this Shabbat dinner, on running a group for youth? In the end, no one will appreciate it, and it won't make any difference." However, the truth is that we don't know the differences our actions can make. Even comparatively small ones can have a huge difference (and significant actions may often not lead to big differences!).

**FALSE HUMILITY IS
WHEN AN AWARENESS
OF OUR SHORT-COMINGS
LEADS TO INACTION,
WHEN REALLY
WE SHOULD BE ACTING**

This is something that we've been shocked to note how true it is over our year-plus of time here in England. Chazal tell us of Rebbe Zeira (Sanhedrin 37a), who would hang out with the ruffians of Teveria in the hopes of getting them to repent. His actions led to no change that he saw, and yet he persisted, **despite even the objections of his colleagues.** Once he passed away, his previous rough friends said to themselves that now no one would be praying for them. They immediately repented. Despite Rebbe Zeira's actions and prayers, the results are only seen after his death. Chazal are telling us that sometimes we may not realise the positive results that may stem from our actions. Although that makes acting all the more difficult, it is an important thought to keep in mind when the going gets tough.

**TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO
EMAIL RAV AHARON AT RAV@BAUK.ORG**

DVAR HALACHA - WEEKLY QUESTION WITH RAV AHARON



Question: Can particularly thick cholent be warmed on a hot plate over Shabbat?

Answer: There is a rabbinic *issur* to return any food to a heat source on Shabbat. However, there are ways to avoid this

issur, either by putting the utensil on top of another one, or through other means. Assuming there are no issues in terms of *hachzara*, is there a Torah-level issue of actually cooking?

Based off different understandings of the gemara, there is a *machloket rishonim* whether there is *bishul achar bishul*. Meaning, once something has already been cooked, is it possible that it can be (halachically) cooked again? Although the Shulchan Aruch paskens (OC 318:4) that a **dry** food (such as potato kugel) cannot be cooked again, he writes that a **liquid** item can have a Torah-level *issur* of cooking done to it twice. Once it is below the temperature of *yad soledet bo* (around 45 °C), reheating it above that temperature would constitute an act of *bishul* (MB *ibid* sk 24).

The Rema mentions (OC 318:15) that the custom is to be lenient if it wasn't "completely cold". There is debate whether the Rema feels that if it **had** cooled completely if the later

reheating would be a Torah-level prohibition (*Iglei Tal*) or rabbinic (*Chazon Ish*). This question can be critical for Ashkenazim in cases of doubt.

Your question relates to the definition of food: how do we define whether something is "dry", and therefore there is no issue with re-cooking it, or if it is "liquid." Rav Moshe Feinstein (OC 4:74 *Bishul* 5), when discussing whether ketchup is considered dry or liquid, writes that the question is "if it is something that flows or if it is a piece that stands and is stuck together even without a utensil that holds it in and sticks it together." According to this definition, ketchup would be a liquid. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv (both brought in *Maor HaShabbat* 2 page 45) both considered ketchup to be a solid, dry food. The *Orchot Shabbat* points out that it may be that they were speaking of different levels of consistency of ketchup, but either way it is difficult to distinguish what is dry and what is liquid.

Based off this discussion, a cholent that was **very** thick could qualify as a dry item, and not have any re-cooking issue. To reiterate an earlier point: even if the cholent is liquidy, if it had been on the fire, one may replace it on a heating source as long as it had not cooled down completely (in terms of the issue of re-cooking; there are other conditions necessary in order to return food to the fire, as mentioned previously).

A TASTE FROM ISRAEL



SAMMY PINE
SHEVET TZION

Hi everyone! I'm currently in Israel studying at Netiv Aryeh in the Old City of Jerusalem. I've just experi-

enced the most incredible Chanukah, full of singing, dancing and togetherness. It's been a highlight of the year so far for me, coming together with friends and Rabbeim to celebrate as one.

Living in the Old City and learning right by the Kotel every day is such a big part of my Yeshiva life. The bustling Rova square and Jewish quarter really adds to the atmosphere, seeing all types of Jews flocking to daven at the Kotel. It's so refreshing

seeing such an eclectic mix of Jews of all backgrounds come together to sing and dance by the menorah, whilst being filmed by hundreds of onlooking tourists. The lights of the menorah act as a literal 'Or Lagoyim', making a massive Kiddush Hashem.

It's great to be able to catch up with all the BANiks out here. One Friday morning I went to a bagel brunch together with everyone from Kivun and Torani. It was great to see everyone and be able to connect with BAUK, even here in Israel.

I'm having an amazing time so far, and just don't want the year to end!

SAMMY WAS A SGAN OF SALFORD SVIVA 5778 AND WAS A MADRICH ON BET BASE MACHANE 5777

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Winter machane is on the 23rd-30th December and applications are still open!! Feel free to email Rafi H at camps@bauk.org to apply or if you have any questions

- We've had an amazing term of Student Bet Midrash!! The new term starts on the 7th January and we can't wait to see everyone there!

- We had an amazing Chanukah Fun-fair this past Motzei Shabbat at Hendon United Synagogue with inflatables, doughnuts and chanichim from all over London Svivot!

- Summer Machane applications are NOW OPEN for Ari, Aleph, Aleph Chalutz and Gimme! For more information please email Rafi H at camps@bauk.org

- Israel Machane applications are NOW OPEN. For more information or a brochure please contact Chana at israel@bauk.org

- Shabbat shalom!!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why was Yosef revealing himself "pleasing in the eyes of Pharaoh"? (See Ramban and Sforno on 45:16)

2. Why did the Torah use the word "להורות" when Yaakov sent Yehuda ahead? (See the Midrash that Rashi cites on 46:28)

3. What was the significance of Yisrael acquiring more property in Egypt? (See Kli Yakar on 47:27)

MACHANE ARI
29th July - 2nd August 2019
Year 3-6

Introducing our brand new Day Camp running in both Manchester and London! Named in memory of Arieh Handler. You will enjoy outings, and many amazing activities!

ALEPH
5th - 14th August 2019

Come join Bnei Akiva at a purpose built building in the Beautiful Peak District!
An awesome experience in the footsteps of our forefathers.

ALEPH CHALUTZI
1st - 14th August 2019

Come join Bnei Akiva at our first class campsite in the Beautiful Peak District!
An awesome and unforgettable experience.

GIMME
31st July - 14th August 2019

Gimme Machane, come join Bnei Akiva in **SOUTH AFRICA** on an EPIC adventure this summer!

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