

# SHABBAT THE VOICE OF LASHEM BNEI AKIVA UK THE MOST WIDELY DISTRIBUTED YOUTH TORAH PERIODICAL IN THE UK



## Anonymous | Bogrim Dvar Torah

"Speak to the Bnei Yisrael and say to them: When you cross the Yarden to the land of Canaan, you shall drive out all the inhabitants...and all their molten images you shall destroy...You shall possess the Land and you shall settle in it. If you do not drive out the inhabitants...those of them whom you leave shall be as if fenced-in in your eyes and a surrounding barrier of thorns in your side."

Almost reflexively, we think of the Book of Shoftim, and how it prominently chronicles the unfortunate fulfillment of this prediction. Bnei Yisrael failed to finish the job of completely routing the inhabitants of the Land. The vestiges of those idolatrous nations became a constant source of trouble for them, leading inexorably to the loss of the Land.

Such a reading instantly resonates with us. It is also incorrect. The danger in allowing the coexistence of the remnants of the evil Seven Nations was not in what they would do to us, but in an ill-founded tolerance on our part that has no place in a Torah nation.

"You shall possess the Land and you shall settle in it." What difference is there between possessing and settling? The Torah tells us that our settlement will be tentative and precarious, unless we first make it suitable for settlement. In other words, the possession that the Torah speaks of is spiritually readying the Land for a Torah nation to properly live within. The Torah commands us to utterly banish idolatry and all its appurtenances as a precondition to settling the Land. This is so important, that it cannot be delayed. We cannot move in until we perform the required housecleaning.

This is so important, that Hashem conveys the message to us three times. In the aftermath of the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe's arguments succeed in having Hashem agree not to destroy the People. Moreover, Hashem quickly moves to reestablish the promise that they will enter the Land. Precisely at that point - with the memory avodah zarah and its effects fresh in their minds - G-d tells the Bnei Yisrael that they must destroy everything idolatrous when they come into the Land. In our pesukim, with the Bnei Yisrael after a 38 year delay finally ready to take possession of Israel, Hashem reiterates His directive. The third occasion is the most dramatic. "The kohanim with the Aron stood still in the middle of the Yarden until Yehoshua had finished telling the people all that Hashem had commanded him to tell the people." What was the content of that speech? According to the gemara Yehoshua once again repeated the instruction of ridding the Land of its idols and idolatry. He had picked an emotion-laden moment. Bnei Yisrael were conscious of having nearly drowned, were it not for Hashem's miraculous intervention. They were thankful to be alive, and now able to look ahead, towards a happy future in the Land. At this crucial juncture, Yehoshua chose to transmit once again the commandment to destroy avodah zarah.

We understand that avodah zarah runs counter to everything the Torah stands for, and is the platform from which every debased and dissolute activity becomes possible. We still need to understand why it would be so terrible to wait a bit before eradicating its icons and acolytes. Our pesukim provide the explanation. "Those of them whom you leave  
*Continued on back page.*

# Gad, Reuven and Mutual Responsibility .....:

Rav Aharon Herskovitz | Rav Shaliach

"The children of Reuven and the children of Gad owned much livestock, and they saw that the lands of Yaazer and Gilad were a region suitable for livestock and [they] came... to Moshe, Elazar the Kohen, and the leaders of the community, and said, "...the land that Hashem has conquered for the community of Yisrael is livestock country, and your servants have livestock." And they said "If we have found favour in your eyes, this land should be given to your servants as a holding; do not move us across the Yarden [river]."" (Bamidbar 32:1-5)

This request is responded to fairly negatively by Moshe, who accuses them of committing a great sin by doing so. Eventually, after some back and forth and a bit of negotiation, the request is accepted and the two tribes (along with half of Menashe) are given the land east of the Yarden river. What was wrong with the request of these two tribes, and why did Moshe eventually accede to it? The language of their request and Moshe's response give rise to a number of different possibilities:

Firstly, the central thrust of Moshe's response seems to be equating their request with the sin of the Meraglim, of causing Bnei Yisrael to despise the land and exchange it for another land (in the Meraglim's case Mitzrayim, and currently the east side of the Yarden). The sin is centred upon the negative affect their request will have on the other tribes, and the possibility that they will once again reject the land that Hashem is giving them (Bamidbar 32:7-15): "Why are you turning the hearts of Bnei Yisrael from crossing to the land that Hashem has given them? So did your fathers when I sent them from Kadash Barnea to see the land. They went up to the valley of Eshkol

and saw the land and turned away the hearts of Bnei Yisrael...and Hashem became angry and swore [that none shall enter the land]... and He made them wander in the desert for forty years...and now you have arisen in the place of your fathers, a culture of sinning people, to add more to the anger of Hashem to Yisrael..."

Although this seems to be Moshe's central point, their response does not seem to relate to this aspect at all.

I would like to focus on the beginning of Moshe's response to Gad and Reuven, as it seems to be the part they focus on in their revised proposal. Moshe begins by saying to them (32:6): "Will your brothers go to war, while you sit here?" Moshe suggests it as an impossibility, as if saying: how could it be that this is what you are suggesting? Although part of Moshe's rhetorical question relates to a general possibility of a split between the two tribes and the rest of Bnei Yisrael, one that comes to the forefront when Gad and Reuven end up returning to their homes (Yehoshua 22), the focus does not seem to be on that, but on an inequitable split in responsibility.

Since leaving Mitzrayim forty years previous, Bnei Yisrael have overall acted as nation. They have reached both great highs and lows as one group. In the last few parshiyot, we see splits emerging, in which the concept of the "tribe" has begun playing a more central role than that of the nation. This is natural and necessary, as the eventual dispersion upon entering the land of Israel will not allow a completely homogeneous and centralised nation. Additionally, it is a fulfillment of the Divine plan, to have specifically twelve parts

"We are one nation, and one body. Just as two arms are linked together as part of a body, and what happens to one affects the other, so too our nation must remember that it is composed of a multitude of elements, and that we are responsible for all"

of one nation.

But once Bnei Yisrael split up into tribes, the danger is that the welfare of the nation as a whole will be abandoned. That tribes may say "I've done my part, my home is secure, I know where my family will live. Why should I risk it all to help others?" To this, Moshe responds "Will your brothers go to war, while you sit here?" In other words, the bonds that tie the nation together are meant to create a sense of mutual purpose and destiny, one that would preclude even the thought of burdens and responsibilities being unequally shared. With this he attacks Gad and Reuven's proposal:

## Dvar Halacha: Weekly Question



Have a question? Please email [rav@bauk.org](mailto:rav@bauk.org) or call/message Rav Aharon at 07976642135.

**ANONYMOUS QUESTION:** Can you wash vegetables/fruit (e.g. lettuce, spinach, strawberries) on shabbat to be eaten immediately?

**ANSWER:** when washing/cleaning fruit we have to deal both with the possibility that one may be violating the issur of borer, as well as killing bugs. Regarding borer, the mishna in Shabbat (140a) states that one should not make karshinin (a type of grain) float in water, nor rub them. These grains are mixed together with dirt, and mixing them with water causes them to separate from the dirt. This is brought as halacha by the Shulchan Aruch, with the understanding being that this separation is separating the pesolet (refuse) from the ochel (food), which would constitute an act of borer. However, many poskim (Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and others) distinguish between soaking the vegetables to remove dirt, and between rinsing them off under running water. The distinction drawn is that rinsing them off is not considered an act of sorting, but rather a normal part of the eating process. This would then be permitted as long as you are doing so close to the time of eating.

Additionally, if you are trying to remove

after we have fought so hard together, acting united as the vehicle for Hashem's victory over Sichon and Og, will that now end?

It is true that each tribe will need to take eventual responsibility for their own lands (see Shoftim 1), but this should not be a true and total split: we are one nation, and one body. Just as two arms are linked together as part of a body, and what happens to one affects the other, so too our nation must remember that it is composed of a multitude of elements, and that we are responsible for all.

something that is not visible (pesticides, non-visible dirt etc.), some (for example, Rav Vosner) who would not allow normally rinsing fruits/vegetables under water would allow this, as this is only an extra standard of cleanliness, and not an act that renders the fruit/vegetables from non-food to food.

Lastly, certain fruits and vegetables require soaking in soapy water (or use of some other additional liquid), which loosens bugs' grip on the fruit/vegetable and allows them to be removed. However, this liquid also kills the bugs. For that reason, if the cleaning is because there is a reasonable certainty there are bugs (as opposed to just an added stringency, as with hydroponically grown lettuce), it would be forbidden to do so on Shabbat, as killing bugs is forbidden.

**TO SUMMARISE:**

- 1) you can soak produce if your intention is to remove pesticides you cannot see.
- 2) you can put it under running water (but not soak) if you are trying to remove actual dirt that you can see.
- 3) soaking in soapy water (or using whatever type of bug-killing liquid) is only allowed if the presence of bugs is uncertain; if it is things that are more likely infested (regular lettuce, strawberries, etc.), then they should only be soaked before Shabbat, as we cannot kill bugs on Shabbat.

# cont. from front page



shall be as if fenced-in in your eyes and a surrounding barrier of thorns in your side.” If you do not immediately work at ridding the Land of the idolaters, they will be “fenced in” and live within “a surrounding barrier.” They will live out of your immediate sight, as if behind fences and barriers that obscure from your vision the abominations that they practice. If you would see how they conduct their lives, you would never tolerate them. When you cannot see what they are doing, you will lose your resolve to be rid of them. When they live in self-contained enclaves, outside of your immediate gaze, you will tolerate them. In so doing, you will tolerate the idolatry that you know they practice. The service of other deities is entirely incompatible with your mission in life, and your mission in the Land. If you cannot discharge your obligation to those missions, you will compromise your special relationship with Hashem, and thereby endanger the providential protection that He

wishes to provide you. We can be tolerant of many things, but not an ideology that stands at complete cross-purposes to Hashem’s expressed Will.

This, more than anything else, is the danger. Going soft on avodah zarah is tantamount to a renunciation of our pledge to G-d. Abrogating our commitment to Him means that we lose some of His assistance. Without that assistance, we have no ability to withstand the onslaught that inexorably follows, as those idolaters find ways to become our enemies and oppressors.

Shoftim indeed is the story of the downward spiral whose engine was the idolaters we failed to banish from the Land. But they were only the obvious, manifest source of our problems. Our real problem was our own lack of resolve, our tolerating that which should not be tolerated.

WINTER MACHANE 5779

SAVE THE DATE  
23rd-30th December  
2018 | 5779

ujia  
OUR SAFETY, OUR FUTURE

תנועת בני אקיבה  
BNEI AKIVA UK