



The Nature of Temptation and Social Pressure

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller-Gottlieb

When the brothers went down to Egypt and were brought to Yosef, they did not know who he was. He presented himself as the viceroy who knew sorcery. Yosef tapped on his divine cup and proceed to seat the tribes around the table. He told the children of Leah, "You are all from one mother, sit here." Then he told the other brothers, "You are from the maidservants, sit here." When he got to Binyamin he said, "You and I are orphans, we'll sit together." Yosef placed his own lot with his brothers. He said, "I'm with you." He saw all of them together, the *shivtei kah*, as one unit. Although he hadn't yet revealed his true identity, he was acting it out. We're from different mothers but we're from one father and together we are one.

Imagine a circle of dancers dancing around one person in the center. All the people in the circle see the same person in the middle, but from a different angle. No one sees the whole picture. Similarly, Hashem can't be grasped entirely by anyone. Each of the twelve tribes had a different level of understanding and perception of Hashem. So too, every Jew will see Hashem through their own unique perception. The human feeling of- "He's not with me, but against me," can destroy us. Don't listen to that voice. Don't say- I'll enrich myself whether politically, financially, or ideologically by removing all threats. That's not how it's meant to be. We're all Jews.

In the High Holiday prayers we ask, *U'vechen-And please Hashem...* We speak about those who are seeking, they should have *tikva tova*, and those who don't even know what to say, should have *pischon peh*... We ask that there should be revelation of Hashem, that there should be light and meaning... Everyone sees Hashem on a different level depending on their choices. The first group mentioned are the *tzadikim*, *chasidim*, and *yesharim*, people whose thoughts, speech,

and action are dedicated to Hashem. *Chassidim*, those who do *chesed* and go beyond what is expected, will see how their actions drew them closer. The *yesharim*, those whose character traits are balanced, will be straight. Those who seek Hashem but have no idea where to find Him, will not have the clarity of *tzadikim*. But the validation of their longing for Hashem will reveal enough that they'll know who to follow. Unfortunately, in our generation, there are also many who are not searching for Hashem at all because He's not in the picture. For them there will be *pitchon peh*, their mouths will open, and their ability to say- "But I wanted to know," which is true oftentimes, will be validated.

We are all different people on varying levels which means we won't necessarily share the same clarity and connection. It's not possible. But everyone will have what they could have, that's possible. So, when we talk about Yosef's brothers, we have to envision the circle and the central figure in the middle. Not everyone sees the same thing, but we're judged as one.

Let's go further in time to the story of the *asara harugei malchut*-the 10 great *tzadikim* who were killed by the Roman government for the serious crime of learning and teaching *Torah*. The Roman emperor asked the scholars, "What is the law if someone sells his brother for profit?" They answered, "He is sentenced to death." The emperor then asked, "Did your people ever pay for the sin of the tribes when they sold their brother into slavery?" Rav Yishmael went up to heaven to ask about Hashem's will and was told they must submit to the terrible decree. What does this mean? The soul powers of the *shivtei kah*, the *yud* and the *heh*, the seeking wisdom and the understanding of where that wisdom should take us, is who we are. We're all descendants of the *shivtei kah* and Hashem has expectations from us as we should from ourselves.

The expectation is that we should see value in every Jew, even somebody who seems to be a threat, not because he's worse, but because he's better.

"My son hold back your feet from them, from walking in their path." There are two explanations. Don't enter the company of those who feel they have to be oppositional towards people who approach things differently within the *Torah* context. And avoid the nations of the world because they will keep you from being you. Don't say the world is universalist. Yes, there's the central figure in the middle and everyone sees things from a different angle. But what if I decided to widen the circle and include all humankind. What if I wanted to invite the Americans, the French, and the Chinese? There are people who are far more exclusive of the spiritual vision as it flows down through society, then we realize. We take this in subconsciously. The Midrash adjures us, don't bring the foreign nations into the circle. Don't go with their sociological and theological laws. Every nation has a certain spark that we can learn from, integrate, and redeem. But it's covered by many layers that we must not learn from.

For example, America is a nation of great kindness and tolerance. You could expand that to mistakenly think that you have to be kind to all people in all circumstances and accept everything and anybody no matter where they are heading, even if it ends up destroying families. When you enter their sociological vision and take the *Torah* out of it, you've doomed yourself. You can avoid going there by noticing where they are heading. We have seen through the ages that even the side of the foreign nations that is good will head towards evil and bloodshed, if there's no *Torah* there.

Categories of Muktzah Part IV #3

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson
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The Mishna Berura discusses the question of whether one may read newspapers on Shabbat. Many poskim prohibit it as newspapers usually contain advertisements and reading them is ossur. The Shevus Yaakov rules leniently. Newspapers were different 100 years ago. They came out weekly and gave readers real information on current events such as the direction battles were heading. People needed to read them to know what was happening. Therefore, the Shevus Yaakov ruled leniently. However, today newspapers are mainly read for entertainment or business purposes and not for current events. Reading the business section raises very serious issue of shtorei hedyotot. Therefore, many poskim prohibit reading newspapers on Shabbat.

Outside of Israel, newspapers are printed Friday night and delivered on Shabbat. Some are owned and operated by non-observant Jews. Others employ non-observant journalists who may write and submit news coverage on Shabbat. Reading a newspaper that was printed and delivered on Shabbat involves serious questions of maasei Shabbat, deriving benefit from chilul Shabbat, nolad, muktzah, and hotzaah issues. There are poskim who prohibit it and one should certainly ask a Rav about it.

Rav Bodner writes that business newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal, industry and trade papers, and business magazines may not be read on Shabbat. He cites the disagreement between the Shevus Yaakov and other poskim regarding newspapers. Even the view

that allows reading newspapers, especially in times of war, still prohibit reading ads and other business-related material such as real estate listings. Poskim who entirely prohibit reading newspapers consider it muktzah. Torah essays found in newspapers may be read however one should be careful not to read any ads. So too, Torah sheets and pamphlets are permitted but one should avoid looking at the ads.

Reading a bridal magazine solely for entertainment purposes would fall under the category of reading novels for which one could invoke the leniency of oneg Shabbat. If one is only reading it for the ads, then it would fall under the prohibition of shtorei hedyotot and would be prohibited.

Traveling through Life Accompanied by Tehillim Part 5

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

In this class, we will examine the history of the Jewish people through the lens of Tehilim. Let's look at Tehilim, Chapter 2. David Hamelech begins with a question, "Why do nations gather and why do regimes speak in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the princes conspire secretly against Hashem and his nation. Let us cut their cords and let us cast off the ropes from ourselves." The nations gather to consult each other to try to find a solution to something that is binding and limiting them.

Let's look at the historical background of this chapter. The sages say that it's connected to two stories written in Shmuel 1, chapter 17 and Shmuel 2, chapter 5. David Hamelech composed the chapter after the second story took place. The two stories are related to the confrontation that David Hamelech had with the Pelishtim. Goliath, the Pelishtim general, came to the Jews, "I have disgraced the battalions of Israel. This day, give me a man and we will fight together." David Hamelech then speaks about Goliath, "For who is this uncircumcised Pelishti that he disgraced the battalions of the living Hashem." David Hamelech sees this not as a disgrace of the

nation but a disgrace of the name of Hashem. We see further that the nations consult about Hashem and about His anointed messenger. The fact that Hashem's name is placed before David Hamelech's, defines what the war was about. They had a deeper agenda. The first war was between King Shaul and the Pelishtim and David Hamelech happened to get involved. The second war was a direct battle between the Pelishtim and David Hamelech who was now king. Hashem helped him and he experienced a miraculous victory. However, the Pelishtim continued to return and fight. David Hamelech therefore asks in Tehilim, Why? Why do they continue to fight Hashem and His messenger if they will not be successful? Haven't they seen how I vanquished their hero, Goliath? What do they want?

When David Hamelech conquered a nation, and this was true for all the nations the Jews conquered when they entered Israel, they were given three options. They could stay in the land and accept the 7 Noachide Laws, they could leave the land, or they could choose to go to battle. Most of the nations chose the third option, refusing to accept the 7 Noachide Laws which made them feel limited. David Hamelech

tells them the consequences of this. "He who sits in heaven will laugh. The Lord will mock them." Their end will not be good. There is a purpose to creation. They cannot ignore their responsibilities, reject their mission, and continue as if nothing happened. Hashem says He will be angry with them and there will be consequences. David Hamelech asks them why they are coming to fight, at most they should leave. Hashem anointed David as a king, he is His messenger and will be with him and help him win the wars. There's no way they will succeed so why are they coming?

David Hamelech tells the nations to contemplate what is going on and come to the right conclusion. "Nashku bar..." Bar means wheat which is transformed to bread, the staff of life. The Jewish people accepted the Torah and became the chosen nation, therefore Hashem watches over us. We are like the bread, the essential ingredient that enables creation to exist. David Hamelech tells the nations, Nashku bar, get attached to us and make peace with us, accept what we ask, because that is Hashem's will.