



EVEN SHESIYA

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Miketz/Chanuka - Legs & Light Special expanded edition for Shabbos - Chanukah

Spies! Now and forever

Yosef frames his brothers as being spies. Perhaps that was easiest crime to frame them for, given the circumstances. But is that all there is to it? The 'Baal HaTurim' writes something fascinating. "... and he told them you are spies...." explains the 'Baal HaTurim' "you are spies - **but not me!** My descendant Yehoshua will not be amongst the conspiracy of the spies in the days of the desert! They replied: "**Lo hayu...**" your servants **are not** spies.... who answered? Yehuda! Yehuda had the right to speak up to Yosef and answer him because his own descendant Calev also will not be a part of the conspiracy of the spies. "**Lo HaYu**" – "were not" is the same numerical value as

"Calev" (52).

Why is Yosef bringing this up now? Why is he rubbing it in their faces that in the future their own descendants will be spies and cause the horrendous setback of having to be in the desert for 40 years and precedent the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash that happens on Tisha b'Av which is when the spies returned from their expedition and sold the "fake news" to the Jewish people about how "bad" the land is? This needs further understanding.

Foot in the mouth

One cannot help noticing that it seems that the Hebrew word for spy "**Meragel**" has the word "**Regel**" - foot in it. The pasuk in Tehilim 15:3 says: "Lo **regel** al leshono...." - there is no slander on his tongue could literally be

translated "no **foot** on his tongue"! Maybe there is something to the expression of "**foot in the mouth**", not in the sense of talking nonsense in so much as speaking evil about people or a country. What is that connection?

Wobbly Legs

When analyzing the significance of "**Raglayim**" - our legs one thing is clear: **It's where we are most vulnerable!** This has been decreed since the very first day of man's existence. After he ate from the "Etz HaDaas" Hashem tells all the parties involved what their punishments will be. Hashem tells the snake "you will walk on your belly... man will slay you by the head but **you will slay him by the heel!**" Subsequently when Yaakov wrestles with the angel, he had basically defeated him already but the angel still manages to wound him in the **legs!** The Gemara (Brachos 6A) says that the **knees** of the Talmidei Chachomim are weakened from the demons and they cause the **legs** to get bumped. but to just bring one more we say that when you cause a person we say in Russian. When a person succumbs to temptation or does wrong we say he is "**Nichshal**" - he **stumbles**. The prohibition of "before the blind that do not put a **stumbling block**" is interpreted by Chazal to not give a person **any type of bad advice** whether in matters of the body or the spirit. It's not limited to causing him to trip, but the "**legs**" are our "**Achilles heel!**" our vulnerable spot and "**stumbling**" has become the ultimate example of man **failing**. Why is that?

Snake Legs

Man has had legs ever since Hashem created him, as did the snake! The snake lost his legs because he caused man to succumb. This means that **the snake ruined our legs and that for that reason he had to forfeit his!** In what way did he ruin our legs? The truth is that **we need to understand what we needed legs for in Gan Eden.** There was nowhere to go, we had everything we needed right in front of us, there was no place man would rather be, and no dangers to run away from. **What were legs needed for?**

Power to Progress

In a world of no needs and no dangers legs mean something almost diametrically opposed to what they're used for ever since the sin of Adam. **"Legs" were to meant progress,** to move to higher and higher states of existence. By no coincidence, for reasons that will be explained further this article, we read in the Haftorah of Shabbos-Chanukah "if you will be upright ...etc....**I will give you walkways amongst these who stand**". "These who stand" are angels. Angels **"stand"** as they cannot progress and attain a higher state of existence other than the way they were created. This is certainly true of lower life-forms. **Man is the one creature that truly moves from level to level.** This is evident from man's own life: any person who has stuck with the Torah way of life will go from being mortal to immortality and get a portion to world in the world to come - not just for soul, but for his body also! The body will be resurrected as a creature capable of living spiritually and forever. **This transition is called "walking".** Jewish law is called **"Halacha" - to walk.** The Torah says: "...walk in my statutes...". **Torah is not just observed, it's a journey, an odyssey of reinventing ourselves perpetually.** It doesn't stop at the end of life in this world, as Gemara says (Brachos 64A): "Tzadikim have **no rest** not in

this world and not in the next as the pasuk says "they will **walk** from strength to strength". Just like man perpetually changed himself and moved himself to higher and higher States of existence by his own efforts in this world so also Hashem rewards him and moves him to higher and higher states of existence in the next world. We are never "at rest" spiritually but perpetually "walking" to higher and higher states of existence.

Running for Life

Because of the sin of Adam, we were reduced to the mortal state we know today. We have needs and we are vulnerable. The legs are used for survival: To avoid and flee danger and to run towards wherever we could procure our needs. We have to **go out** to work in the field or the **marketplace** to exchange what we have for what we need. Worse than that: **Our legs function without thought!** If you had to think before taking a step you would get nowhere fast! In order to flee danger, you have to be able to run without concentrating on taking steps. This is a terrible setback for the person because **even when not in danger, walking is the thing that you can do without thinking and that's why you can stumble!** This is what sets up the whole concept of 'stumbling'- the fact that you could do something without thinking. "Habit" is what we do without thinking. The Hebrew word for "habit" is "Hergel" – root of the word is "Regel"- Leg, because the "Leg" is the precedent for doing without thinking. Going through life without thinking is what creates pitfalls because we have to always be thinking in order to combat the Yetzer Harah who is always out to get us. To "walk" through life without thinking is to walk into traps. This also strips us of the positive value and power of Mitzvos. If we do them by "habit" we turn our hands into legs - and not in a good way. Doing a mitzvah without thinking and feeling the benefits of the Mitzvah will be far less for

you and **cosmically** because you are not doing the mitzvah with your soul, only your body. **The soul is involved in the Mitzvah by means of thinking and feeling what you're doing.**

Hit in the Legs

With this we could understand why the Yetzer Hara and all the forces of evil get us in the legs. The legs represent being in a hurry with no time to think because we're running away from danger or running to procure our parnassa. Being harried ruins our focus on what's truly important in life. Legs are also the part of man that could function without thinking whatsoever. When you're not thinking you stumble and fall. That's what it means that "the snake slays us at the heel", the angel got Yaakov in the legs, and the demons attack the Talmidei Chachomim there. When we are distracted by running for our survival and livelihood or worse just doing things by rote without thinking you will stumble and fall.

Spies & Slander

Another result of running without presence of mind or without thinking at all is that you wind up in the wrong place, you get lost, you find yourself where you don't belong. **The spy ("meragel") does this on purpose!** He **infiltrates** where he doesn't belong and is not wanted in order to discover **secrets and vulnerabilities**. To speak loshon hora is also called to be a "Rachil" to **go around like a 'peddler'** spouting information with no discretion. The pasuk in Tehilim 15:3 says: "Lo **regel** al leshono...." - there is no slander on his tongue could literally be translated "no **foot** on his tongue – because **"Slander" is when the mouth is running and running and saying things without discretion.**

Aliya L'Regel

With this we could understand the significance of why the Yomim Tovim are

called **"Regalim"** - legs and have a special obligation of a **"Aliyah l'Regel"** literally meaning "raising the legs". On Yomtov we are supposed to leave the pursuit of a livelihood and survival behind us and get reconnected to the real purpose of our "Legs". We are here find a way to Hashem and travel that route. As a reminder of what the "journey of life" is about we have to **journey** to the Beis HaMikdash and leave the "outside world" of survival and career **-THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME INTO EXISTENCE** behind us and ascend and focus on Divine service which is the real purpose we were created for. It's called that we **"raise the legs"** out of the arena of avoiding danger and seeking livelihood and raise them to Divinity within this world reminiscing of what "Legs" were meant for and the first place: to journey towards Divinity.

Shabbos – where your supposed to be

Shabbos is on a higher-level. We don't need to **travel** in preparation for Shabbos to any particular destination, because **on Shabbos Holiness is everywhere!** we simply need to **"reign in our legs"** to not leave our appropriate place, which comes to us! That's played out by the fact that on Shabbos there is a Prohibition to carry from domain to domain and we have to stay within the "Techum Shabbos". "Man should **not leave his place** on Shabbos"(shmos 16:29) or as the Navi says (Yeshayahu 58:13) **"reign in your legs** on Shabbos". Holiness is everywhere and you're where you belong, just stay!

Greek Legs

The Greeks **trespassed, infiltrated,** and did **break in entry** to the Beis Hamikdash. They brought in the "outside world" into our sacred realm and thus defiled it. That whole outside world that's called "legs" as in to run from danger and running in pursuit of our livelihood - things that would have never been necessary if not for the sin of Adam.

That is also the world of “habit” (Hergel) a **world without thought or feeling**. we are not amazed by nature and we are amazed by miracles - to the point that “rational people” are very uncomfortable with Miracles – **it’s not what they’re “used to” (Ragil)**! The truth is that is foolish! **“Nature” is no less wonderous the “Miracles”!** The problem is that nature we are “used to” (Ragil). We are so used to it that it’s like any “habit” (Hergal) it’s something that we no longer think about and appreciate. the Greeks only knew nature and “thought” they can wrap their heads around it... That is false (as scientific progress of the last few centuries proved – the Greeks did NOT have it all figured out) because **nature is much bigger than the human mind** (something scientist are FINALLY forced to admit when it comes to Quantum mechanics) we’ve just grown too accustomed to it to the point that we “think” we could understand it **because we're not amazed by It**. There's a lot to be amazed by but since we're used to it (Ragil) and routine we are not motivated to praise Hashem for it. **On Chanukah we realize Miracles and Nature are equally wonderous, so we say Hallel and she’asa Nissim for all 8 days even though it was “natural’ for the first day.....**

Sending light to the Legs

When the Chashmonaim drove out the Greeks and renovated the Beis HaMikdash they ‘closed up’ all the breaches that the Greeks made. That’s reestablishing the boundaries between the “outside world” of survival and secular pursuit and the “inner world” which is the true purpose of creation. They took it one step further and instituted Chanukah candles by the doorway or by the window to **shine out** to the “outside world”. **“Ad she’tichleh REGEL min HaSHUK”** - until there's no more **legs** in the **marketplace!** They coined this law in an amazing phraseology which gets to the essence of what it’s about! The “outside world” the

“SHUK” - the world of Commerce that only exists for the purpose of lightening the burden that was created by the sin of Adam. The most dominant force of the market are the “legs” -movement. You have to “move the merchandise”. This **“running around”** and **“routine”** distract and numb you from your real purpose in life and puts you to sleep spiritually. The light of Torah has to shine down to **“the legs in the marketplace”** to dispel that illusion that’s created by the darkness of the sin of Adam. That’s what Chazal mean that by creation the “darkness” refers to “Greece that darkens our eyes”. **They built a whole culture that capitalizes on the darkness created by the sin of Adam!** whether On Chanukah we bring the light of the Torah **OUT to the legs in the marketplace** and bring the light of Torah to the outside world. **Instead of raising the legs to the Beis HaMikdash we make this right by bringing the light of the Beis Hamikdash down to the legs in the marketplace and dispel the darkness there!** That’s the secret of what it says in Tehillim (119:105) **“Ner l’ragli devarecha”**- a **CANDLE** for my **LEGS** are your words – the HALACHA (Walking)tells us how to **walk** by the light of Torah even in the darkness of the world of “legs” so we don’t stumble or lose our way

The Meraglim

The challenges of going out from the realm of Holiness to the outside world of nature is exactly what’s the “Meraglim” faced. In the desert they lived a miraculous life no less miraculous than Eden. The food came directly from Heaven every day a miraculous well accompanied them. They were surrounded by the clouds of Glory that did their laundry and their clothes just grew with them. When they go into the land of Israel they now have to live “naturally”, not just to engage in warfare with the hostile inhabitants, but they have to go work for a living! The men that Moshe sent were meant

to go on a positive reconnaissance mission as Moshe said to look at the beauty of the land if it's fertile and the great produce asides from the strength and fortification of the local inhabitants. The "Meraglim" got overwhelmed by the natural world that they saw, and **their mentality got reduced to "natural" way of thinking which is all "Hergel"** thinking that only what's "Regular" (=Ragil) is possible and what's miraculous is impossible. They thought they would have to capture Israel on its own terms: just like in Israel there was a "natural" way of life so also it has to be captured "naturally" and they did not see how they could take down the mighty Nations living there. They were called "Meraglim" because they went "down to the feet" - they saw the routine of nature and did not think they can make it in that routine. They **lost sight that Hashem does miracles even within the realm of nature**. Only Yehoshua and Calev **kept their perspective** that even though they saw the same things the other spies saw they did not forget that Hashem can give the power to Vanquish the enemies and even where nature rules Hashem still does miracles.

Yosef vs Yehuda

Now we go full circle to Yosef and his brothers. The situation was geographically reverse but conceptually the same as the Exodus. Whereas by The Exodus they were going from Egypt to Israel and here the brothers were coming from Israel to Egypt - the challenge was the same: **to leave the safe spiritual confines of the desert or the household of Yaakov in the holy land and go into the realm of "nature"**. As we mentioned last week, Yosef represents the "spark" that goes out - the Chanukah candle that shines outside. Yosef went into the secular world of Egypt and did not lose his way. He stayed faithful to Hashem and his mission to pave the way for Jewish people. He sanctified

Hashem's name wherever he went. "He remembers the dreams...." **that he is meant to rule over the other brothers and he feels that this is totally justified because he's the one who can handle the outside world, not lose his way, and win it over for the kingdom of heaven.** He says: "you are spies...." also alluding to the future: "when your descendants who represent you will go to the land of Israel and **see the mode of conduct of nature they won't be able to handle it and integrate it in their Divine service! Therefore, you need me to lead!**" Yehuda responds - No ! He can lead because his descendant Calev will also not overwhelmed or disoriented by the realm of nature. This exchange is paving the way for the generations long debate between Yosef and Yehuda that continues in next week's Parsha: who really is the true leader of the Jewish people? This is what will be discussed in next week's Parsha sheet, stay tuned!



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