



Bet Horaah

בית הוראה

Shaarei Ezra

שערי עזרא

Parshat Beshalach

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 4:47pm

Shabbat ends: 5:51pm

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WHISKERS OF WEAKNESS: HOW ENEMIES POUNCE ON VULNERABILITY.

WRITTEN BY RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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Beshalach

It's intriguing to observe the thematic symmetry in our parasha, Beshalach, as it opens and concludes with a resonant message. The recurring theme emphasizes the vulnerability that surfaces when weakness is expressed, inviting merciless attacks from adversaries. In the initial stages, the Torah recounts that after three days of departing from Egypt, Hashem instructed the nation to halt their journey and simulate being lost in the desert. This deliberate act was a manifestation of expressing weakness and vulnerability. The strategic intent was to create an illusion for Pharaoh, making him believe that the nation was lost, thereby providing him with what seemed like the opportune moment to launch an attack.

Towards the end of our parasha, Amalek launches an attack against Am Israel. The verse states, "ויבא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל ברפידים" (Chazal interpret the term "Refidim" as a hint to the weakening of the nation's commitment to Torah study, as found in "שרפו ידיהם מן התורה"; (בכורות ה,ב) signifying a decline in Torah learning. This expression of weakness becomes apparent, providing an opportunity for Amalek to perceive vulnerability and launch an attack.

One might question why Pharaoh, even after experiencing ten plagues, feeling fear, and acknowledging his inability to persist in harassing the Jewish nation due to Hashem's protection, would still attempt to attack. The answer can be likened to a cat that, despite initial terror of being caught by a person, loses all fear when it spots a mouse. In this situation, the cat pursues the mouse even in the presence of the person, as the temptation is too strong to resist. Similarly, when Pharaoh perceives the vulnerability of the Jewish nation, he loses control of his restraint and impulsively rushes to chase

them.

The same principle applies to Amalek. At the end of Parashat Ki Tetze, Amalek attacks the spiritually weak in Israel. Rashi explains that he attacked those who were spiritually weak, signifying their inclination towards sin. This illustrates that enemies discern two types of weaknesses. One is physical



weakness, as Pharaoh detected, and the other is spiritual weakness. The lesson is clear: we must not allow ourselves to be weak at any moment; as such vulnerabilities are immediately detected by our adversaries.

Recent events have underscored this principle more than ever. Israelis were observed globally in a state of division, with pilots threatening not to fly war-planes and army reservists expressing their unwillingness to participate in the next war. Our enemies perceived this as an opportune moment to make their move and launch an attack.

On Erev Shabbat, we read the Mishnayot (שבת פרק ב') stating that women may face mortality during labor due to three sins: negligence in observing Nidah laws, neglecting the separation of Chalah, and failing to light the Shabbat candles. The Gemara explains that the punishment may occur during labor because the woman is then vulnerable and weak.

Chazal (שבת ל,א) draw a parallel to a butcher aiming to slaughter an ox. The butcher seizes the opportunity when the ox falls, rendering it defenseless. Chazal express this concept with the saying: "נפל תורא, חדד סינאי", which translates to "when the ox falls, sharpen your knives." This metaphor emphasizes the idea that vulnerability creates an opportune moment for consequences to manifest, urging individuals to be vigilant and avoid spiritual shortcomings, especially during critical times.

STRATEGIC STEPS OF WALKING BACKWARDS IN HISTORY

Interpreting the Body Language of Determination for the Mission.

ופרעה הקריב. (שמות יד, י) רש"י- ופרעה הקריב - "היה לו לכתוב ופרעה קרב, מהו הקריב? הקריב עצמו ונתאמץ לקדם לפניהם".

Our parasha demonstrates various forms of body language related to how a person walks or travels. A person's walking pace and movements can reveal subtle nuances about their mindset and intentions. Observing someone who walks briskly with a determined pace often signals a strong sense of purpose and goal-oriented behavior. This rapid stride suggests confidence, indicating awareness of their destination and a focus on efficiently accomplishing tasks.



This parallels a significant aspect in our parasha when Pharaoh and his army chase Am Israel. They move in unison, driven by a singular goal and mission.

"והנה מצרים נוסע (שמות יד, י) The language used in the Pasuk stating that they were traveling to chase Am Israel in singular tense, emphasizes the unity of purpose among Pharaoh and his army—they all shared one mission. This observation aligns with the idea that body language extends beyond individual actions and can reflect collective intentions and objectives.

The verse further underscores Pharaoh's determined endeavor to approach the nation of Israel. The specific wording in the pasuk, "ופרעה הקריב" (Pharaoh approached), is elucidated by Rashi, who explains that Pharaoh exerted a strong effort to draw nearer to the nation. This nuanced interpretation adds depth to the narrative, highlighting the intentional and forceful pursuit by Pharaoh as he sought to close the distance between his army and the people of Israel. It reveals their determined mindset, demonstrating a resolute commitment to chase the Jewish nation without any hesitation. This collective determination echoes through their synchronized movements, emphasizing the unified purpose propelling Pharaoh and his army in their relentless pursuit.

Body Language of Hesitation and Confusion.

"דבר אל בני ישראל וישבו ויחנו לפני פי החירת בין מגדל ובין הים לפני בעל צפן נכחו תחנו על הים. ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל נבכים הם בארץ סגר עליהם המדבר." (שמות יד, ב-ג) רש"י- וישבו - "לאחוריהם לצד מצרים היו מקרבין כל יום השלישי כדי להטעות את פרעה שיאמר תועים הם בדרך כמו שנאמר ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל וגו'".

Contrary to the determined person who walks with assurance, an individual who hesitates, taking a brief step back before moving forward, might be grappling with uncertainty or indecision.

This momentary pause could reflect a reconsideration of choices, possibly due to a lack of confidence in the chosen path. This deliberate pause may manifest as a contemplative approach, with the person carefully evaluating the situation before proceeding.

Furthermore, if the person not only hesitates but also displays signs of confusion, such as turning around or appearing disoriented, it could be linked to being unsure about where to go or feeling lost. In this scenario, the physical act of turning around or stepping back becomes an outward expression of their internal struggle to find the right direction. The confusion may stem from a lack of clarity in their surroundings or uncertainty about the correct path, emphasizing the complexity of their thoughts and emotions in that moment.

Pharaoh demonstrated a keen awareness of subtle cues in body language. This became evident when Pharaoh discovered that the Jewish nation had revisited a location they had already passed through, known as 'Pi Hachirof.' After their initial departure from Egypt, the nation embarked on a three-day journey. Hashem then instructed them to go back, creating an appearance of being lost. This strategic move aimed to deceive Pharaoh, making it seem as if the nation had lost their way and creating an opportunity for him to perceive them as vulnerable and susceptible to attack.

This calculated move was part of a larger divine plan. The anticipated outcome was that the Egyptians, driven by Pharaoh's decision to chase the seemingly confused and disoriented Jewish nation, would follow them into the split sea. Hashem foresaw this pursuit leading to the ultimate culmination of divine justice—a powerful and final punishment for the years of oppression that the Egyptians had imposed upon the Jewish people. The splitting of the sea and its subsequent flooding was destined to be a consequential event, symbolizing both liberation for the Jewish nation and divine retribution for their oppressors.

This particular form of body language is readily noticeable, and indeed, Pharaoh was quick to discern its significance. However, it's crucial for us to be attuned to such cues even when they are more subtle and nuanced. A close observation of an individual embarking on a mission reveals valuable insights, especially by paying attention to their approach.

Interpreting Body Language in a Contented Space.

ויסע משה את ישראל מים סוף (שמות טו, כב) רש"י- הסיען בעל כרחם, שעטרו מצרים את סוסיהם בתכשיטי זהב וכסף ואבנים טובות, והיו ישראל מוצאין אותם בים וגדולה היתה ביזת הים מביזת מצרים שנאמר (שיר השירים א): תורי זהב נעשה לך עם נקודות הכסף. לפיכך הוצרך להסיען בעל כרחם.

Another example illustrating how people feel is found in the narrative of Moshe Rabenu having to forcefully remove the nation from their settled place. Rashi explains that the reluctance to leave stemmed from their engagement in collecting the valuable

STRATEGIC STEPS OF WALKING BACKWARDS IN HISTORY

spoils—gold, silver, and precious stones—that washed ashore, belonging to the Egyptian chariots. This episode reveals a universal truth: when individuals are content and happy in their current situation, their reluctance to leave becomes evident.

Final words.

Those teachings provide us with insights into understanding a person's mindset as they walk towards their task. We can glean a lot from their walking style, gaining valuable information about their feelings regarding what they are about to do. For instance, if an individual is moving at a leisurely pace with a lack of interest, it becomes apparent that they lack enthusiasm for reaching their destination. This observation offers crucial insights into various situations, such as when considering the hiring of a worker. Slow and disinterested movements may indicate a likelihood that the individual won't perform the job efficiently, suggesting potential

delays and diminished interest in the work at hand.

In another scenario, witnessing someone hurrying to yeshiva in the morning provides a clear signal of their passion for learning. The brisk and purposeful steps indicate genuine eagerness, suggesting that this individual values education and is committed to reaching the yeshiva promptly. These subtle cues offer valuable insights into assessing an individual's attitude, work ethic, and priorities. Certainly, one sign alone may not provide a conclusive understanding, as there could be other underlying reasons. For instance, the person walking slowly might be having a bad day or not feeling well, yet they could perform well at work. On the other hand, the person hurrying to yeshiva might be rushing to meet an old friend. However, a combination of body signs can offer more comprehensive insights into a person's mindset and intentions.

HALACHOT RELATING WINTER.

Is snow Muktzah?

Cleaning snow is generally permitted on Shabbat. According to most opinions, snow is not considered muktzah (set aside) because it is likened to rain that falls on Shabbat, which is also not considered muktzah. This is because the water was in the clouds before Shabbat, thus, it is not something that wasn't already part of the world. (אשל אברהם בוטשאשט מהדור"ת סי' ש"ב, ששי"כ עמוד רמב)

Although snow is not muktzah, forming a snowman or snowball is prohibited due to the violation of Bone (building), as the Rambam פ"ז (מהלכות שבת ה"ו) states that attaching small pieces together to form one thing is forbidden. Some also argue there is a prohibition of Dash (squeezing) as water may squeeze out when pressed together.



Is Cleaning snow on Shabbat permitted?

Snow cleaning, whether by shoveling or salting, is permitted on Shabbat. Even those who restrict melting ice on Shabbat allow it in places where people might slip on the snow or ice. (מחזה אליהו) (ח"א סימן סז-סח)

Is there a halachic obligation to remove snow and ice to prevent anyone from slipping?

The Torah instructs us to eliminate hazards from our property, as evident from the obligation placed on one with a pit in his property to remove dangerous conditions and provide compensation for damages in case of injury.

Although one is not responsible for a pit or potential damage in the public domain or at someone else's place, the laws of digging a pit obligate one to pay for damages if they were the one digging it and failed to cover it properly. However, even if one didn't dig the pit in their own domain, they must ensure that the pit is

covered. The Bach uses rain as an example of such a pit that he didn't dig, and similarly, ice and snow creates a household obligation to eliminate the danger and compensate for injuries if they occur (ח"מ סימן תי"ד).

Can we dip utensils in the snow?

One who can't take his utensils to be dipped properly in the mikveh is allowed to dip them in snow (פתי תשובה י"ד) (סימן קכ"ד בשם החכמ"א), ensuring that the entire utensil is immersed and that the snow touches every part of it (חזו"א קלג, אות ג'). This leniency applies only to glass utensils, which are subject to a Rabbinic requirement, or porcelain, which many hold doesn't require immersion, making the snow dipping a stringency. However, metal utensils, being a Torah obligation, may not be dipped in the snow.

Turning on the heat.

If, for some reason, the heat stops working on Shabbat or if it's not sufficiently warm in the house, one cannot turn it on themselves as it involves igniting the boiler, constituting a Shabbat violation. However, in extremely cold conditions (Ohr L'tzion suggests freezing point at 32 Fahrenheit), one may ask a non-Jew to turn on the heat. If there are small children or elderly individuals in the house, it is permitted to ask the non-Jew even if the temperature is not as cold, as these age groups are more susceptible to getting sick. (שולחן ערוך סימן רע"ה)

Opening and closing windows and doors.

One may open and close windows and doors even if it might cause a change in the house temperature, potentially triggering the heating system. There are various reasons to permit this action,

HALACHOT RELATING WINTER.

including the indirect nature of the effect (grama) and uncertainty about whether the heat will actually turn on (meaning it's not psik reisha). Additionally, the person opening the door may not have the intention for the heating system to activate but rather intends to enter or exit the house (eino mitkaven).

Opening the radiator steam valve.

One should avoid opening the steam valve on Shabbat, as there is water in the radiator that heats when the valve is opened. While solid food that was pre-cooked is permitted, heating liquid on Shabbat is not allowed and should be avoided. This prohibition is specific to Shabbat, but on Yom Tov, it is permitted to cook as cooking is allowed on Yom Tov.

Hanging the coat near the radiator.

In the event of getting wet from rain, one may not place their wet

coat near the radiator because the drops on the coat may heat and get cooked. This is certainly prohibited for those who place it by the radiator with the intent for the coat to get dried, but even those who don't should be careful as it is considered psik reisha. (שולחן ערוך סימן שא סעיף מו)

Hanging the coat to get dry.

Chazal restricted us from hanging wet clothing on Shabbat because it appears as if we washed them that day (ערוך סימן שא סעיף מה). Some even restrict hanging dry clothing, as people seeing it can't tell if it's wet or not from far (בא"ח יחיא אות א'). Still, some permit hanging the coat since the norm is not to wash a coat but rather, when it's dirty, people usually send it to dry clean, so one who sees it understands it wasn't washed (מנחת אהבה ח"ב עמוד תכד).

תפילה עם כלי נשק

הכנסת או בביתו, (אלא שהגר"ע יוסף דחה זאת ע"ש). אולם מכלל דברי הפוסקים נראה שהכריעו שלא כדעת המקובלים הנ"ל ואסרו רק בבית הכנסת, וראה בספר מטה יהודה (סימן קנא). ובספר תפילה כהלכתה (פרק כז הלכה כד) כתב שהנושא נשק לכתחילה יסורנו או יכסנו בטרם יתפלל. ופשוט שאם אי אפשר לו לעשות כן, לא יבטל תפילתו משום זה. ויהיה רצון שהקב"ה יקיים בנו את הפסוק: "וכתתו חרבותם לאתים וחניתותיהם למזמרות, לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה".

אני חייל ויש לי שאלה עבור הרב בבקשה. כשמגיע זמן תפילה ואין לי אפשרות להניח מעלי את הנשק, האם מותר לי להתפלל עם הנשק.

שלום לשואל החשוב.

בדברי רבותינו מצאנו התייחסות לגבי כניסה בכלי מלחמה לבית הכנסת. בגמרא מבואר (סנהדרין פב,א) שאסור להיכנס לבית המדרש בכלי זיין, ובשולחן ערוך (או"ח סימן קנא ס"ו) כתב שאין להיכנס לבית הכנסת בסכין ארוך. ומובא בזה הטעם לפי שבית הכנסת מיוחד לתפילה שמארכת ימיו של אדם, ואילו הסכין מקצר ימי האדם (משנה ברורה שם). וכל זה בסכין שאינו לצורך אכילה, אבל אם מכניס סכין לצורך אכילה הדבר מותר (ביה"ל שם), ונראה הטעם שכיון שאז אינו נחשב ככלי זיין.

והנה הבית יוסף הביא (סימן קנא) בשם רבינו פרץ שאין להחמיר אלא אם כן הסכין מגולה, וכן הביא המשנ"ב שם בשם האליה רבה. ועל פי דברים אלו פסק הגאון הרב"צ אבא שאול (אור"צ פרק מה אות נט) להתיר להכנס לבית הכנסת בנשק מכוסה באופן שאינו ניכר.

ולכן היה נראה שרשאי להתפלל מחוץ לבית הכנסת בנשקו, ובודאי שרשאי אם נשקו מכוסה, אלא שמצאנו בדברי המקובלים שכתבו להזהיר שלא ישא אדם על עצמו שום ברזל בשעת התפילה (כף החיים סימן צב ס"ק כט), וכן דייק הגר"ע יוסף (יחו"ד ח"ה סימן יח) מדברי המהר"ם מרוטנבורג שהוא מקור ההלכה שאסר להיכנס לבית הכנסת בסכין מהטעם שכתבנו לעיל שהסכין מקצר ימיו של אדם, ואם כן טעם זה שייך בין אם מתפלל בבית



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