



Parashat Terumah 5770

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

Purim is Coming...

Sending Mishloach Manot to Tzahal Soldiers: Two Teshuvot

I suggest that the community seriously limit sending Mishloach Manot to friends, and to concentrate on sending them to the soldiers in the area, whose lives are difficult. According to Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz, the reason for sending Mishloach Manot is to increase love between Jews, and according to the author of Terumat Ha-Deshen, to provide someone with food for the festive meal of Purim. Regarding soldiers, both reasons apply. Therefore, no one should be offended if he does not receive a Mishloach Manot from his friend, and all of us will be aware that our gifts are lovingly going to the guardians of our security.

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol. 5 #49 in the original edition]

A year ago we began a tradition of seriously limiting sending Mishloach Manot from one person to his friend and to give Mishloach Manot to soldiers who safeguard our security and it is appropriate for us to continue to do so. This year there is also an organized trip to an army base. Everyone should therefore donate to Tzahal, and do not be offended if you do not receive a Mishloach Manot from a friend. I guarantee that he is your friend with all of his heart.

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol. 1 #234 in the original edition]

For example, you can send Mishloach Manot to Tzahal soldiers through the websites: www.hebrongifts.com/mimafoso.html or <http://pizzaidf.org>

Rav Aviner on...

Ta'anit Dibbur

["Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" Mishpatim 5770 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: What are the laws of a Ta'anit Dibbur? [literally, “a fast from speech” – undertaking not to speak words unrelated to Torah, for a particular amount of time]

Answer: This is a new practice not mentioned in the Torah, the Mishnah, the Talmud or the Rishonim [medieval Sages], but only amongst several of the Acharonim [more recent Sages]. It is therefore impossible to determine halachot about it, and everyone can do whatever he wishes. This custom was spread by Rabbi Yitzchak Alfia, author of the “Kuntres HaYechieli,” and there several practices are elaborated upon, as they are at the end of the “Ish Matzliach” edition of Tehillim, for example, completing the Book of Tehillim three times.

Yet the main thing is to be careful with one's speech and to avoid Lashon Hara, gossip and other forbidden speech. One can talk, but one shouldn't say forbidden things. The Vilna Gaon wrote: “Until the day of one's death, one must chastise oneself, not by fasting and self-torture, but by restricting his mouth and his cravings. That is repentance, and that is all the fruits of the World to Come, as it says, 'For mitzvot are a candle and the Torah is light' (Mishlei 6:23), but 'reproofs of instruction are the way of life' (ibid.). This is greater than all the fasts and self-torture in the world... Scripture states (Tehillim 34:13), 'Who is the man who desires life and who loves days... It is one who guards his tongue from evil.' By such means one can atone for any sin and be saved from hell. As it says (Mishlei 21:23), 'Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles,' and, 'Life and death are in the hands of the tongue' (18:21). Woe to him who kills himself for the sake of one comment. What advantage is there to the gossip?' (Alim Li-Terufah)

There is therefore room for holding a Ta'anit Dibbur as an interim means of learning to distance oneself from gossip, backbiting, and insult. As in the well-known words of Rambam, in order to be cured of an evil trait, one must temporarily move to the opposite extreme (Hilchot De'ot 2:1-3).

We find the following in the Mishnah Berurah: "I saw written in one sefer that when a person wishes to conduct a voluntary fast day, better that he should undertake a fast from speech than from food, for avoiding speech will do one no harm, either to his body or to his soul, nor will it weaken him" (Orach Chaim 571, M.B. 2; and the same idea may be found in Shemirat Ha-Lashon, Sha'ar Ha-Tevunah, chapter 2).

Obviously, however, all this refers to where one thereby does no harm to his wife or his children who wish to speak with him, or to anyone else who needs him. It is more important to speak kind words than to remain silent. There's a story of a bus driver who engaged in a verbal fast and did not want to help his passengers who were asking him where to get off.

Surely our Sages said, regarding Tehillim 58:2, "Is it true [he'omnam] that you were silent [elem] about the righteousness that you should have spoken [tzedeq tedaberun], the fairness with which you should have judged the children of men?": "What should man's trade [omanut] be in this world? He should make himself mute [ilem]. I might think this applies even to Torah learning? It therefore says, Tzedeq tedaberun", 'Speak righteousness' (Chulin 89a). Thus, silence is not appropriate across the board. Rather, it is an "omanut," an "art" or a "trade". It involves much wisdom, skill and sensitivity to know when to be silent and when to talk. When it comes to Torah and charity, you should talk. Here is our great master Rambam: "One should remain silent often and not speak except to utter Torah wisdom or to say something that he needs to sustain his physical self. It was said of Rav, a disciple of Rabbi Yehuda the Prince, that he never throughout his life engaged in vain chatter, which is the talk of most people. Even for one's physical needs one should not speak much. In this regard our sages commanded, 'Whoever talks much invites sin.' They said further, 'I have found nothing better for the body than silence' (Hilchot De'ot 2:4). Sometimes there is also a need to engage in kind words to one's fellow man, to encourage him, strengthen him or gladden him. And sometimes, obviously, we do him a kindness by listening to him.

The rule is this: Sefer HaKuzari calls man "the Speaker". That is his virtue, that he can think and talk (Rashi on Bereshit 2:7). He must therefore use this supreme virtue for good, and be very responsible for every word he says.

Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Ha-Rav Zonenfeld's Funeral

When Ha-Rav Yosef Chaim Zonenfeld ascended on high, Maran Ha-Rav Kook wanted to attend the funeral, but our Rabbi forcefully prevented him, saying that he would lay down in front of the wheels of the vehicle and stop him from going out of a fear that the zealots would attack him (Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira quoted in Imrei Shefer of Rav Yitzchak Dadon p. 261. And there were actual cases that zealots physically attacked Maran Ha-Rav at several funerals. *ibid.*).

The Brisker Rav and Ha-Rav Maimon

Ha-Rav Eliezer Melamed wrote in the newspaper "Besheva": After the anti-Zionist Brisker Rav - Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik – harshly opposed the building of Heichal Shlomo (the building of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel), Ha-Rav Yehudah Leib Maimon wrote a scathing criticism about him. My father and teacher, Ha-Rav Zalman Melamed told me that he went to speak with Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah about this and asked him: When a lesser Rabbi disagrees with a greater Rabbi, isn't this an impingement on the honor of the Torah and shaming a Torah scholar? Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah answered: Certainly. Ha-Rav Zalman Melamed then asked about Ha-Rav Maimon: How does he harshly disagree with the Brisker Rav? Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah answered: "But he is right" (meaning in regards to the dispute about Heichal Shlomo and similar issues). My father, who was then still younger, feared that he may have insulted Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda since the latter justified Ha-Rav Maimon's actions.

At a later period, my father accompanied Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah on his way, and Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah said: You think that you are honoring the Brisker Rav. But in order to honor, one must understand and know, and then the honor is true, and the criticism does not impinge upon that which he must honor. And he related that there is a question why the Rambam placed the laws of the head Tefillin before those of the hand Tefillin (which one puts on first), and Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah explained before the Brisker Rav that the Rambam wanted to teach the idea that the head Tefillin is a mitzvah in and of itself, and he therefore did not teach them in the proper order. And he said that the Brisker Rav, who was an expert in the Rambam, liked his explanation.

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

A Good Heart

Question: I do not understand how Yitzchak agreed to marry a woman who he did not know, and he relied on Eliezer to act as his agent. What if it was not a good match? And I also do not understand how Rivka, without knowing Yitzchak, says: "I am going" (Bereshit 24:58). It seems like a recipe for disaster!?

Answer: It was not a recipe for disaster but a recipe of kindness. Eliezer did not choose just any woman he met but searched for a woman with a good heart, who agreed to take water from the well, a large quantity, without asking questions. It was a sign that she had a good heart. He then said to her: You have a good heart. In our house, everyone has a good heart and you fit in, come with me (Rashi). When one has a good heart, he can overcome all problems. He does not only love to receive, he loves to give. And they indeed loved one another (ibid. v. 67 and 26:8). The most important thing is a good heart. Therefore, if you have a good heart you are fortunate. And if you do not, begin to work on it.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

