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Parashat Reeh - #293

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## On the Temptation to Fan Controversy

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Ekev 5773 – translated by R. Blumberg]

The evil impulse is a very intelligent being, and doubly so when it comes to fanning controversy.

What does the evil impulse say?

It slyly turns to the Charedim and says, “Look at those secular people! They're the lowest of the low. How destructive they are of the Torah and those who learn it, thereby destroying our Nation.” Quite logical. Quite convincing!

Encouraged by its success, it turns to the secular: “Look at those Charedim, the lowest of the low. How destructive they are of the army and the labor force, thereby destroying our Nation.” Quite logical. Quite convincing!

It then bounces back to the Charedim, hammering away at their brains, thereby succeeding in sowing discord between the two groups. It rubs its hands together with pleasure, and having fanned the flames of discord, those flames spread by independently. The work of the evil impulse is then carried on by others, leaving it free to turn to other missions. Truly creative.

As for those who believe in the Torah, the Nation and the Land of Israel, they are caught in a heavy crossfire, shot at from both sides, and they, too, take shots at both sides. That is the doing of the evil impulse, which takes new forms daily.

I forgot to mention that within each group the evil impulse also creates illusory subgroups and fans quarrels between them. So our own internal forces also shoot at one another. Obviously, the primary division between the Charedim and the secular is illusory. The whole thing is illusory. It's all nonsense.

Now you might ask: What do you want from the evil impulse when it sows strife? Isn't it just doing the job that G-d charged it to do? To incite people, to make them sin, to make them quarrel, both with their fellow man and with their spouse? It makes them sin, sets them up for the kill, and then slaughters them. That's its job!

Yet there is an interesting opinion of our Sages in the Talmud that one who slaughters on the Sabbath is guilty of the work category called Tzove'a. This word Tzove'a here has the literal meaning of “dyeing”, but the word's root can also mean “hypocrisy”. The evil impulse, which slaughters the sinner, is indeed a hypocritical liar and a cheat. When it

talks to the Charedi, it disguises itself as a Charedi, talks like a Chareidi, using the distinct accent of the Charedi.

When it addresses the secular Jew, it speaks lovely, fluent secular Hebrew, proving very pleasing to them.

Even when it addresses the disciples of Maran Ha-Rav Kook, it talks in the language of Rav Kook's disciples. Of course that is a bit difficult, but the evil impulse adapted itself quite quickly, and the followers of Rav Kook do not succeed at distinguishing between the evil impulse and their master. After all, it learned in the yeshiva of Rav Kook, Mercaz HaRav! When was he there? He was there together with us.

So, you must be stubborn with stubborn characters. We'll lay a trap for that scoundrel. We'll interrogate him up and down in the court of justice composed of both Charedi and secular judges, but obviously, the chief justice of the court will be a National Religious Jew. After all, we National Religious Jews are better than everyone else, smarter than everyone else, more perfect than everyone else, and we have an official document signed by the evil impulse. Actually, others, as well, claim that they have a similar document (but theirs' are obviously forged)....

And we, the court, will ask the evil impulse of strife, controversy and quarreling several incisive questions:

**Q: What is your name and your address?**

A: I am the evil impulse, a.k.a. the hypocrite. My address is everywhere. I am not prejudiced. I live with everyone, Charedim and Zionists, religious and irreligious, Yemenites and Ethiopians, academics and day laborers... I also work with children and youth.

**Q: Who do you work for? The Charedim, the secular or the religious? Who are you with?**

A: I'm not with anybody. I am with evil, but I cheat, and that way I succeed.

**Q: How do you cheat?**

A: I know that you are really one Nation, with more in common than what divides you, that G-d loves all of you, and that all of you face the same trouble from your enemies, that you are all good people, and that there is only one way to destroy you.

**Q: Namely?**

A: The paragraph of the Hagaddah "Ve-Hi She'amda" can be interpreted as teaching that when we are not united as one Nation, precisely that is what rises up to destroy us.

**Q: But that's not the simple meaning of the words!**

A: That's my interpretation, and it works...

**Q: You tell us all this to our face. Are you not afraid that we will expose your deception?**

A: No, because you are idiots. For thousands of years you have been fighting amongst yourselves, bringing calamity on yourselves, and you haven't yet learned your lesson.

**Q: So we've got some news for you.**

A: Which is?

**Q: We have indeed learned our lesson. Presently there really is a lot of love within the Jewish Nation.**

A: A lot of love?! Easily disprovable! I have just now organized great quarrels over drafting yeshiva students into the army, and over yeshiva budgets. It was my idea, to sow strife, and it has been a resounding success.

**Q: You failed. We didn't take the bait.**

A: You sure did!

**Q: No. A small minority sinned. Most did not. The mainstream of each stream did not sin. Only isolated individuals.**

A: Isolated individuals! Yet even a single dead fly can ruin all the ointment.

**Q: You're wrong. We got confused for a moment, but now we are returning to sanity.**

A: It doesn't look that way.

**Q: But it is that way. You don't see because you are blind. Look how in the army itself there is love and brotherhood and peace and friendship amongst everybody. And that sets the tone for all Israeli life. We are going in the right direction, and we are progressively being healed. Are there differences of opinion? Yes! Are there divisions of the heart? No! Are there wars over opinions? Is there a civil war? No! Because we are brothers! One Nation with one heart. "Who is like you, one united Nation in the Land."**

Rav Aviner on...

Are Levi's Kosher?

Q: Is it permissible to wear jeans or a jean skirt? I heard that some rabbis ruled that it is forbidden because jeans are not modest.

A: Quite simply, the material itself is not a problem. This material is durable, not easily ruined and, as is well-known, quite affordable. This material also does not stick to the body. A material which sticks to the body and outlines its contours is not modest for men and, all the more so, for women. My understanding is that the rabbis who say that it is forbidden to wear jeans do not do so because of immodesty, but because they represent a distorted culture. When you wear jeans, you identify with this culture. The whole problem of wearing clothing which represents the surrounding non-Jewish culture is called "Chukat Ha-Goyim – following the non-Jewish practices." It is forbidden for us to wear the same clothing as non-Jews. This prohibition only applies, however, if the non-Jews are the only ones who wear a particular type of clothing. If observant Jews also wear them, there is no problem of "Chukat Ha-Goyim." This discussion is similar to one regarding the black suit worn today by many yeshiva students. Originally in Russia, yeshiva students did not wear suits, they wore all sorts of long coats. What happened? Rabbi Yisrael Salanter once visited Paris and he saw that university students were wearing suits. He said, "Those who are learning in yeshiva need to dress like those students. They are students of Torah and holiness." In Lithuania, the students therefore wore suits. When those students arrived in Jerusalem, the Sages of Jerusalem excommunicated them. They wrote harsh broadsides that wearing this type of clothing is a violation of "Chukat Ha-Goyim." One needs a long coat. There is a principle, however, that if people

breach this prohibition and dress like non-Jews, they are in violation, but once this practice has spread, it is no longer forbidden since this dress is no longer worn solely by non-Jews. This is stated in the responsa of the Rashba (vol. 5 #121). It is possible that in the past someone who wore jeans was identifying with the distorted culture, but today all sorts of people wear clothing made with jean material, both men and women, including righteous, G-d-fearing individuals. It is therefore permissible to wear such clothing. Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein also has a responsum on this issue in "Igrot Moshe" (Yoreh De'ah 1:81). He was asked if there is a requirement to wear the clothing which Jews wore in Poland, since in America both Jews and non-Jews dress alike. Ha-Rav Moshe answered that it is permissible to wear the clothing like the non-Jews since there is no unique type of Jewish clothing, and even G-d-fearing Jews wear the clothing like the non-Jews. Similarly, there is a story told about a couple who moved from Hungary to America, and the wife wanted to cover her with a wig like others in America instead of shaving her hair and wearing a scarf as had been the custom of her foremothers in Hungary. The husband, however, did not agree and he went to Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein to ask about this issue. Ha-Rav Feinstein saw that the husband did not have a beard. He asked: Did your father and grandfather have beards? He said: Of course, everyone had a beard. He asked: why are you clean-shaven? He said: This is America! Ha-Rav Feinstein said: If so, there is no problem for your wife to wear a wig. Everything is dependent on the issue of modesty. If the jeans and the jean skirts are modest, they are acceptable. If they are not modest, including having images and decoration which draw the attention of others, they are not acceptable. In short: It is not a question of the material, but the piece of clothing itself - as in the case of all other items of apparel.

## **Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law**

### **Women Reciting Kaddish**

Le-Ilui Nishmat

Q: First I heard that I can recite Kaddish for my Mother, and afterwards I heard that it is forbidden for a woman to recite Kaddish. If so, what can I do Le-Ilui Nishmat my Mother?

A: Any Mitzvah which you perform will help her soul ascend. And there are Mitzvot greater than Kaddish, whose recitation is not mentioned in the Torah, Mishnah, Gemara, most Rishonim, Rambam and Shulchan Aruch. It is only mentioned in the Rama (Orach Chaim 25:13, 132:2). And the Torah itself is full of many Mitzvot. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch also writes that any goodness which you perform will be a merit for your mother. And this is more important than Kaddish. End of Siman #26.

Dispute

Q: There is a woman in our community who wants to recite Kaddish Le-Ilui Nishmat and it is causing a major dispute. What should we do?

A: Tell her that a dispute does not help a soul ascend.

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