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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Tazria ✍️ Rabbi Meir Stern

It's All in the Head

"Ish Tzarua Hu, Tomei Hu, Tomei Yitmenu Hacohen B'roishoy Nigoj"- He is a person with tzoraas, he is tomei, the kohen should declare him tomei, his affliction is upon his head (13,44).

In the various forms of tzoraas mentioned previously in the parsha, the Torah has either mentioned "tomei hue"- he is tomei or "v'timeh hacohen"- the kohen shall declare him tomei. Regarding Nigei Harosh, tzorass that is found on one's head, the Torah emphasizes, "Ish Tzarua hue"- he is a person with tzoraas. Then the Torah reiterates regarding the same mit-zorah, "the Kohen shall declare him Tomei". Why is there such an emphasis on the Tomei status of Tzaraas Harosh?

The Netziv explains that Tzoraas on one's head is a punishment for lacking Emunah, faith in Hashem. The Torah stresses, "Tzoraas Hue" because we need an extra admonition to stay clear of someone with heretical thoughts.

Perhaps there is an alternative way to explain this based on the words of Rav Pam Zt"l (A Pleasant Way). Rav Pam points out that while we are all well aware of the prohibition of Lashon Horah, we tend to focus solely on the utterings of our mouth when in truth we should be focusing on our thoughts and perceptions we have of other people. Our opinions of other people are what find their way to our mouths and become expressed as Lashon Horah.

By focusing on the positive traits of every person, we will likely limit and constrain our urge to speak Lashon Horah. This may be the significance of Nigei Harosh, Tzoraas of the head. Because one's thoughts and outlook of people are the source of evil slander, the Torah emphasizes that problems can arise if we do not ensure that our minds have the proper perspective of our fellow Jew.

The Baal Shem Tov taught a humbling lesson from this parsha. Chazal say that one can inspect all Negaim, "Chutz Mei'nigei Atzmo"- except for his own negaim. The Baal Shem Tov explains Al Derech Drash that all negaim, plagues, that a person sees "Chutz", in someone else, are a reflection of Nigei Atzmo, his own shortcomings.

When the Belzer Rebbe Zt"l moved to Tel Aviv, he would assume that whenever he saw a car being driven on Shabbos, it was a woman on the way to the hospital to deliver a baby or someone with another medical emergency.

The Belzer Rebbe's commitment to Shabbos was so engrained in his very being, that he could not fathom its desecration.

The Baal Shem Tov writes that if a person sees something negative in another person, it is like he is looking at a mirror, and he is seeing a part of himself. Therefore, rather than focusing on problems in others, one should look to perfect himself.

Alternatively, we should overlook deficiencies in others just like we tend to overlook deficiencies in ourselves.

May we merit to see only the good in others which will cause us to refrain from speaking Lashon Hora, and will be good for us in this world and the next.

(Based in part on Peninim on the Torah.)

Rabbi Stern learns with the Zichron Aharon mechanchim chaburah at the kollel.

HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Shabbos and Yom Tov away from home

Rabbi Ephraim Friedman

In today's age when people travel across the country and across the globe with great frequency, it is quite common that an individual will spend Shabbos or Yom Tov in a time zone which is different than that of his home. There are a number of interesting sha'alos in halacha which result from this and I will attempt to address some of these sha'alos.

Mechiras Cometz

One question which many people encounter this time of year is with regard to the sale of chometz. If you reside in America and will be spending Pesach in Israel, where do you sell your chometz? The simplest thing to do would be to contact your local Rav before your departure and authorize him to sell your chometz for you on Erev Pesach as usual. Perhaps, however, this is not the correct thing to do. For when the Rav sells your chometz in America at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, at your current location in Israel it is already late in the afternoon, and the latest permissible time to own chometz has long passed. [Needless to say, your observance of the Yom Tov and its related laws and practices must be in accordance with the local time. This has nothing to do with the fact that an American visiting Israel for Pesach is obligated to observe two days of Yom Tov on both ends of the holiday.]

One might argue that although the observance of Pesach may have begun for you based on local Israeli time and you could not own any chometz which is located **there**, perhaps you may still retain ownership of chometz which is located in a part of the world where the prohibition has not yet begun. And in fact, one of the gedolei haAcharonim seems to take this position. See Sha'alos U'tshuvos Oneg Yom Tov 36 who discusses a reverse case where the prohibition of owning chometz has begun at the location of the chometz but not at the location of the owner. He rules that the halacha is determined by the location of the chometz and it is therefore rendered valueless in this case and must be destroyed.

However, the vast majority of Achronim disagree with this approach (although they may agree that one should be stringent in the above case and dispose of the chometz by the earlier time). They maintain that the *main* factor to consider is the location of the owner of the chometz. In as such, an American spending Pesach in Israel must arrange for his chometz to be sold prior to the zman issur hanoah according to Israeli time. (The simplest way to do this may be by arranging for mechiras chometz with a Rav in Israel once you arrive.) A resident of California who is spending Pesach in Chicago or New York should arrange for his chometz to be sold prior to the zman in the city where he will be located. At the same time, it is also proper that one not own any chometz located in a city where the zman has arrived, even if at the owner's location the zman has not yet arrived. Therefore, an Israeli resident spending Pesach in America, or a New Yorker spending Pesach in L.A. should have his home town Rav sell on his behalf any chometz which he is leaving behind. In all such cases, one should stipulate with the Rav that he is not authorized to purchase the chometz back on his behalf until Pesach has ended in both of the two locations. (See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:94. See also Piskei Tshuvos 443:1 for many additional sources.) It should be noted that in a year when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbos it is of less importance to have chometz sold in the earlier time zone, since in any case mechiras chometz is done on Friday which is two days before Pesach.

Shvisas B'heima

A second area of halacha where time differences play a major role is that of

shvisas b'heimah – the resting of animals on Shabbos. The Torah states that a Jew is obligated to see to it that any animals he owns are not made to do melacha on Shabbos. This halacha has relevance even for city dwellers with regard to pets. One's pets may not be led to perform any melachos on Shabbos, including the melacha of hotzo'ah (carrying). If the animal walks outside with a tag hanging from its neck (such as one for identification purposes) the owner is in violation of this halacha – unless of course the area is enclosed by a valid eruv.

The following question must be addressed. If an animal owner is located in one time zone and his animals are located elsewhere, when are the halachos of shvisas b'heimah in effect: when it is Shabbos at the owner's location or when it is Shabbos at the animal's location? If I am in Israel for Shabbos and a neighbor in America is looking after my dog, may he walk that dog on Friday afternoon when it is already Shabbos for me, although the dog has a tag around its neck, or may he not?

This question is actually a subject of discussion in the writings of a number of Achronim. One of these Achronim (Sha'alos U'tshuvos L'vushie Mordechai Vol. 2:47) is inclined to rule that the animal's location is the critical factor. According to this, in the above case it would be permissible for my American neighbor to walk my dog on Friday afternoon. However, the consensus of Achronim is to the contrary. They state that the location of the owner, not that of the animal, is what counts. Accordingly, if you leave your pet or other animal in the care of a neighbor, you would be well advised to bring to his attention that he shouldn't have the animal do any melacha at a time that it is Shabbos for you. (See Sha'arim Mitzuyanim B'halacha 87:1 and Ta'arich Yisroel Pg. 203 quoting HaGaonim Rav Elyashiv and Rav Chaim Kanievsky shlit" a. See also pgs. 213-214 for a unique perspective on this matter from HaGaon Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l.)

Other Areas

There are numerous other areas of halacha where a difference in time zones may play an important role. For example:

T'chum Shabbos – The mishna in Mesechta Beitza (37a) states that one's possessions are bound by the same t'chum as their owner. Consequently, if when Shabbos begins an article of mine is located somewhere outside of my t'chum, it is governed by the rule governing articles which have left their t'chum and may not be moved – by anyone – more than four amos. If an article of mine is located in a time zone different than mine when exactly does this restriction apply to it?

Neiros Chanukah – If one is away from home during Chanukah and his wife lights neiros in their home, he is yotzei the mitzvah as well. What will the halacha be if the husband is in a different time zone so that when his wife lights at home the evening has not yet arrived in his location? See Halichos Shlomo Vol.2 Chapter 13:4; Minchas Yitzchok 7:46; Moadei Yeshurun page 4 no. 8. (Note: In many cases the husband will be required to light at his current location even if his wife is lighting at their home within the *same* time zone. It is not our intention to provide any actual halachic guidance on this matter within this short paragraph.)

Oso V'es B'no – One may not slaughter a calf on the same day as the mother animal was slaughtered (Vayikra 22:28). If the mother animal was slaughtered in America at 3:00 P.M., may one immediately slaughter the calf in Israel where it is already the next day? See Meshech Chochmah (ad. loc.)

One who is faced with any of these sha'alos, or any one of a number of sha'alos which can arise as a result of travelling across the globe, should consult with a Rav who can provide him with proper direction.

Rabbi Friedman, *Moreh Hora'ah of Beis HaMedrash Mikor HaChaim and Dayan for the CRC*, gives shiurim at the kollel.