When Not to Argue with Someone Who is Doing the Wrong Thing

By Jack E. Rahmey

In recalling their request to send meraglim - spies to assess Eretz Yisrael beforehand, Moshe chastises B'nei Yisrael for making the request, but he conceded that "the idea was good in my eyes." The Talmud deduces that Moshe felt it was a good idea to send meraglim, but Hashem did not. Hashem knew that sending spies would end in disaster, and He did not want them to go.

Rabbi Frand asks that if Hashem knew that the meraglim would end up poisoning the nation's minds against Eretz Yisrael, why did He agree they could go? Hashem could have told Moshe, "Tell them that I am G-d, I call the shots, and I said 'NO!"

Rabbi Chaim Mordechai "Mottel" Katz (1894-1964), the late Rosh Yeshivah of Telz in Cleveland, Ohio, takes an important lesson in chinuch from this incident. There are times that children want to do something that their parents deem inappropriate or incorrect. Our parental instincts tell us to lay down the law and prohibit them from doing what they want. We reason to ourselves that we are required to mechanech—educate our children, and sometimes this means that we have to say, "No."

But is it always right to say no?

We learn from the spies that there are times that we have to grant requests, even if we know that what our children want is wrong. Hashem knew that the people were not ready to accept His refusal. Had Moshe returned from Hashem with a negative response, they would have thought, "How are we supposed to go and fight against a country without sending spies? Everyone knows that you don't fight without intelligence," and they may have sent spies anyway.

Sometimes, notes Rabbi Katz, chinuch is all about conceding. We have to distinguish between when our children can accept the denial and when they are just too set on doing what they intend to do to receive our "no."

Rabbi Katz added a personal anecdote on this lesson that must have occurred in the 1940s or early '50s.

"One day, the boys came over to me in yeshivah and asked me to change the schedule for one night," wrote Rabbi Katz. "They wanted to pray Arvit earlier than we regularly did. When I asked them why they wanted to daven early, they explained that a heavyweight championship bout was being fought in New York that night, and they wanted to listen to the match on the radio. If we prayed at the regular time, they would miss the fight."

"Of course," writes the Rabbi, "the very request was inappropriate, not to mention the questionable propriety of yeshivah students



Rabbi Chaim Mordechai "Mottel" Katz



listening to a fight between two humans trained to beat each other until one of them could no longer stand up. I realized that if I refused, the boys would not understand why I did and possibly skip Arvit.

Growing up in America, they were accustomed to the finest, most respectable citizens flying in from all over the country to view these matches. They considered watching or listening to the radio broadcast of two adults pummeling each other, a perfectly normal means of recreation."

"I decided," concludes Rabbi Katz, "that since these boys would not begin to understand why I was refusing their request and would challenge my rejection, it would be better to allow them to pray early and listen to the match."

Of course, there are many cases in which parents and mechanchim have to say no. But in this case, Rav Mottel learned from the best Teacher. If Hashem permitted Klal Yisrael to do something that He knew was wrong when He realized they could not accept His refusal, then the Rosh Yeshiva of Telz had to find it in himself to do the same.

The following is a true story about Rav Shlomo Wolbe, ztl, a veteran expert in proper chinuch. Rav Wolbe wrote extensively about raising children and the psychology of moral education. He had a gentle and practical approach, and this story exemplifies many aspects of his parenting method.

One of his daughters had just gotten engaged, and the future in-laws were invited for a Shabbat dinner at the Wolbe home. In an atmosphere of great purity, Rav Wolbe welcomed the new in-laws warmly, and everyone wished each other Shabbat shalom.

When his daughter's future chatan arrived, he warmly exclaimed, "Welcome to our future son-in-law!" The atmosphere could not have been more joyous and pleasant throughout the Shabbat meal. Suddenly the doorbell rang repeatedly.

Everyone was astounded, and there was tension in the room. Who could be ringing the doorbell?

Rav Wolbe opened the door, and in walked his rebellious son, who had left the community and was no longer religious. He wore a t-shirt with slang, jeans, and sneakers. He wasn't wearing a kippah, and as he walked in, he threw his cell phone and car keys on the hall table.

Rav Wolbe's response filled everyone with surprise. His voice was filled with love and happiness at seeing his son, and he greeted him like he would have the most outstanding yeshivah scholar. He said warmly, "Oh, welcome, my son. Really, what an honor that you came to join us for dinner tonight. How could we have had this very special Shabbat without you? Come, please come in; you must be hungry."

The son sat at the table next to his father, who did not express any disapproval. His voice was full of acceptance, and his message was one of unconditional love. He was not embarrassed or ashamed of his son in any way in front of his future son-in-law and his family. He made his son feel that his father was so very proud of him.

"I see you're looking well," Rav Wolbe said. His son shrugged. "Yeah, I'm fine," he said flippantly. Rav Wolbe turned to his daughter's fiancé and said, "You should know that you have an extraordinary brother-in-law, really extraordinary. His intelligence has amazed us since he was a child. I'm certain that you'll get along well together." He continued praising his son in front of the others to raise his self-esteem and show his unbending love and respect. He could see right into his son's heart that he was good and capable of great things, which is what he chose to focus on.

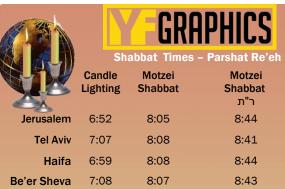
As they were singing Shabbat songs, Rav Wolbe reached out and laid his hand on his son's. The gesture was full of love and acceptance and said, "No matter what, you are my son. I am very proud of you. I miss you and will always love you." At the end of the meal, Rav Wolbe said, "Thank you for coming. Our family would never have been complete without you, and we love it so much when you join us."

The son said, "Thank you, Dad," took his car keys and cell phone, and left. As he reached his car, just as he was about to start the engine, he hesitated, thought about the evening, and decided to return to his father. As he entered the house, he immediately went over to his father, and they hugged each other. He told him, "Thank you for being there for me. I'll be walking tonight, not driving."

Ever since that evening, this "rebellious" son changed his ways to become a true man of Torah. He explained it a few years later: "Even with my profanities and provocations - he didn't get upset, didn't criticize me, nor did he force me to do anything I wasn't comfortable with, like saying brachot or wearing a kippah. He surrounded me with much love and acceptance, the only thing that ultimately connected me back to Torah." As this chinuch expert has taught us, love, rather than rebuke, pays off immensely!

May we all hesitate before rebuking another person. If we must, may we only do so after first giving positive thoughts and compliments. May we also learn to accept rebuke from others who genuinely want to help us grow. May we learn from Hashem when not to say "no," and always accept our children with love.

Reprinted from an email of email of Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.



A Superiour Scholar and True Friend By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Background

Rabbi Adin Even-Yisrael Steinsaltz was born on 3 Av 5697 (1937) to Avraham Moshe Steinsaltz, a descendant of the first Rebbe of Slonim, and Rivka Leah Krokovitz, a descendant of the first Rebbe Vorka (Warka, Poland). When he was a teenager, Rabbi Adin became a ba'al teshuvah (someone who returns to his/her true Jewish roots).

At the early age of sixteen, he began to study mathematics and physics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Parallel to his academic studies, he learned the Oral Torah in Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim in Lod. He also studied in the Jerusalem yeshivas, Torah Emmet and Mir.

At the young age of 24 he was offered the position of Chief Rabbi of Holon, but refused. Over the decades, he established a network of experimental schools and educational institutions in Israel and the former Soviet Union.

In 5751 (1991) Rabbi Steinsaltz changed his last name to Even-Yisrael upon the recommendation of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He authored over 400 books concerning every aspect of Torah including Kabbalah and Chasidut, although he is best known and celebrated for his monumental linear translation with commentary of the entire Babylonian Talmud, which he began at the age of 28 and finally completed in 2010.

Rabbi Adin Even Yisrael Steinsaltz passed away on 17 Av 5780 (August 7, 2020). He was buried in the Chabad section of the ancient Mount of Olives Cemetery.

Story

One of Rabbi Even-Yisrael's close students related:

During one of her pregnancies, my wife, who had juvenile diabetes, was suffering from drastic, dangerous, and uncontrolled drops in her bloodsugar levels. One Friday might, I met Rabbi Steinsaltz in the synagogue.

"How are things going?" he asked

"Not good at all," I replied and embarked on an enumeration of the difficult situation.

Rabbi Adin asked about the doctors, and I answered that we had already tried everything. He lowered his eyes, waited a bit, looked at me with penetrating eyes and asked:

"And are you praying?"





Rabbi Adin Even-Yisrael Steinsaltz

Truthfully, his question irritated me. "Do you really believe that prayer can do something?" I responded. "Will these words truly balance her sugar?"

Rabbi Adin turned red. After a moment he said to me, "Look, if you don't believe in the power of prayer, then the only solution is for G-d to push you against the wall. He will pressure you and cause you pain until ultimately, not only will you pray, but you will shout. And then He will answer!'

Rabbi Adin's answer made me feel very pressured, and even a bit insulted. I began to sob uncontrollably. He looked at me with compassion and blessed me with "Shabbat Shalom," whereupon I went home.

Amazingly, from that Shabbat day on through the end of the pregnancy, my wife didn't have one significant glycemic drop. In other words, we were saved!

Rabbi Adin was very happy to hear the good news. When I thanked him profusely, he responded with a sentence that to me is immortal:

"Look, I don't know if I'm a Baba whose prayers are more accepted than the next person's. Anyway, I actually think that something completely different took place. When you tell a friend your trouble from the depths of your heart, from the point of your pain - G-d hears.

"This is the explicit meaning of the verse Then the people who feared G-d spoke to each other, and G-d listened, and He heard. You spoke from the depths of your heart with a good friend and G-d heard."

Translated and adapted from KabbalaOnline.org



ראש חדש אלול יהיה ביום חמישי וששי Rosh Chodesh Elul will be Thursday and Friday

We begin to recite לדוד ה' אורי on the 2nd day Rosh Chodesh until Shmini Atzeret, some hold until Simchat Torah and some hold Hoshanah Rabbah inclusive. Some begin on the first day of Rosh Chodesh.

We begin to blow Shofar every week day at the conclusion of Shacharit until the day before Erev Rosh Hashanah where we

Torah Compilations Re'eh

This week's Parasha commences with the words " אה אנכי נותן וקללה ברכה היום ברכה "See, (singular) I am giving you (plural), today a blessing and a curse".

So, who is Hashem speaking to? Is He speaking to me, to each single, individual Jewish person or is He speaking to the whole

Actually, the answer is both. And we have the very same phenomenon at the beginning of next week's Parasha of Shoftim: "שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך", "Judges and bailiffs, you shall place for you, (singular), in all of your (plural)

Actually, what we find here is a theme that runs right through the Book of Devarim. We all live with dual responsibility - I live by myself for myself and at the same time, I am an important cog within the wheel of Am Yisrael. When Hashem delivers His commandments, they are addressed to me personally, for my life, for the enhancement of my existence, and at the same time, what I do has a direct impact on the fate of the nation as a whole.

And we find this in Sefer Devarim, so beautifully put, through the two paragraphs of the Shema. They contain a lot of the same material. The Mitzvot, 'To Love Hashem', 'To Study the Torah', 'Tefillin' and 'Mezuzah', however there is a major difference: The first paragraph of the Shema is in the singular, addressed to the individual Jew, while the second paragraph of the Shema is in the plural, addressed to us all.

So, therefore I have that dual responsibility. For example, when it comes to Talmud Torah, I must learn and I must teach, but I also have a communal responsibility - I must guarantee that there are schools in my area, I must support all teaching initiatives for the sake of the nation.

And so too, when it comes to 'Tefillin' and to 'Mezuzah'. I've come across some wonderful Gemachs, to provide Mezuzot for people's homes. Mezuzot cost a lot of money - they're not cheap. And so, there are some wonderfully generous people who contribute towards Mezuzot for everybody's homes, recognizing that we have a responsibility for ourselves but also for all of the homes in our area.

And this very message is presented to us so beautifully by the Prophet Hoshea, who declared: "בוי ישראל כחול הים", "And the number of the Children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea". Of course, Hoshea was speaking about the remarkable fact that over the years, through the generations, against the odds, we will have great numbers. But why didn't he just talk about 'הול', 'sand' – why 'כחול הים', 'the sand of the sea'?

And the reason I believe is, because 'the sand of the sea' is tightly packed together when it's wet, but at the same time, it's made up of single grains of sand. And so too, we, each one of us, is responsible to ourselves, and at the same time, we must never forget our connection to our people and the responsibility that we have towards our society. So join me and let's pray with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, loving and sweet Shabbat.



NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 55 MITZVOT ASEH: 17 MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 38

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 126 NUMBER OF WORDS: 1932 NUMBER OF LETTERS: 7442

Yeshayahu 54:11- 55:5 (עניה סוערה). (this is the third of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah). Some including Chabad, have the custom to add the first and last Pesukim of the Haftora "Machar Chodesh"

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Elul Rosh Chodesh - Thursday & Friday - August 17 & 18.

This week we study Chapter 6 of Pirkei Avot

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Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz אַ"יש"י, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chessed
Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

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MONTH OF ELUL

On *Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul*, people give extra Tzedakah.

It is a Yerushalmi Minhag to go to Kivrei Tzadikim on *Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, there are some who specially go to Mearat Hamachpela and Kever Rachel.*

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai to receive the second set of Luchot. He returned with them on Yom Kippur, with Hashem having granted complete forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. These forty days are an especially auspicious time for Teshuvah.

The Arizal taught that the thirteen attributes of Divine Mercy are revealed in the month of Elul, assisting in one's efforts to do Teshuvah. The Baal Hatanya explained this idea with the famous parable of Melech B'Sadeh – the King in the field. The month of Elul is thus known as the Chodesh Horachamim (month of mercy), and the gates of mercy are open to all who wish to come close to Hashem through Teshuvah, Tefillah and Torah. These ideas should be publicized as much as possible.

Elul is the month of preparation to usher in a new year replete with good and blessing, both physically and spiritually.

The word Elul is an acronym for a number of *Pesukim* alluding to the ideas of *Torah*, *Tefillah*, *Tzedakah*, *Teshuvah* and *Geulah*. The month of Elul is an appropriate time to increase in all of these matters.

One should increase learning, particularly those topics applicable to the month of *Elul*.

One should also increase in Ahavat Yisrael and Gemilat-Chessed.

Elul is the "month of reckoning". During this month, one should make an accurate assessment of all one's thoughts, words and deeds, and reflect on all the experiences that occurred during the course of the year. One should improve and strengthen one's qualities, and at the same time, regret and correct one's deficiencies — both the errors and wrongs that were committed, as well as those things which were not performed as well as they could have been. One should resolve for the future to fulfil Mitzvot in the best possible manner; to be more diligent with regards to Torah and Tefillah; and to correct one's negative Middot as well as acquire positive Middot.

During the month of Elul, according to the Sephardic communities, Selichot is recited daily. (The Ashkenazi communities start Selichot this year, Motzei Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech, September 9th.)

During Elul, one should be enthused with much *Simcha*, in recognition of the special closeness that Hashem shows us — "The King is in the field".

Even though Elul is a time to arouse others to *Teshuvah*, this should be done in a pleasant and humble way, and not by G-d forbid saying harsh things about others.

№ L'DAVID HASHEM ORI

We begin reciting L'David Hashem Ori on Rosh Chodesh. Chabad and some other Chassidim start on the first day whilst everyone else starts on the second day. During Shacharit, some recite it after Aleinu and some, including Chabad, recite it after Shir Shel Yom (or after Borchi Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh). Chabad and some others recite it during Mincha before Aleinu. Some communities recite L'David Hashem Ori at Mincha after Aleinu, and some only after Ma'ariv. When davening Mincha with a Minyan who says it after Ma'ariv, one must still recite Aleinu together with them. If one needs to defer L'David Hashem Ori as a result, he should recite it after Aleinu and before Al Tirah.

SHOFAR

Shofar is blown during the month of Elul, most have the custom to begin on Sunday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh and some on the first day. The purpose of hearing the Shofar is to arouse feelings of Teshuvah.

Some have the custom to blow *Shofar* also after *Mincha* or *Maariv*. Those who blow *Shofar* after *Maariv*, should do so also on *Motzei Shabbat*

Some have the custom to blow just *Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah* and others, including Chabad, blow ten sounds. [*Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah*; *Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah*; *Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah*.]

If one was unable to hear the *Shofar* with a *Minyan*, he should still endeavor to hear the *Shofar*.

During Elul, one does not need to repeat the sounds, if the *Shofar* was *Passul* (e.g. it had a crack or hole). Similarly, one does not need to repeat any sounds blown incorrectly (e.g. the *Tekiah* was too short). If the *Ba'al-Tokeah* chooses to fix his mistake, he certainly does not need to redo the entire section, as he would, were it *Rosh Hashana*.

OTHER CUSTOMS OF ELUL

There is a tradition to recite 10 extra chapters of *Tehillim* each day of Elul, which will equal the completion of Tehillim twice (300 chapters – numerically equivalent to – D – atonement). Chabad have the custom to only recite three extra chapters of Tehillim each day. Ideally, these should be recited immediately after the *Tehillim* that is normally said at the end of *Shacharit*.

If one neglected to recite these chapters of *Tehillim* on the appropriate day, he should do so at the earliest opportunity.

Beginning on the first day of *Rosh Chodesh*, most, including Chabad, have the custom to wish (both in person as well as in writing):

"Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah L'Shana Tova U'Metukah". [The Lubavitcher Rebbe included these wishes at the end of his letters. From Rosh Chodesh onwards, he would write only "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah", and would begin adding "L'Shana Tova U'Metukah" from around the 18th of Elul onwards.]

Although the basic requirement is to check *Mezuzot* and *Tefillin* twice every seven years, some have the custom of checking them every Elul.

DATES IN ELUL

2 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Shoftim. The first chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited.

9 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. When reading the last Passuk of the Parsha, the word Zeicher is read twice, first with a Tzeirei (Zeicher), and then again with a Segol (Zecher).

The second chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited.

15 Elul – Being thirty days before *Sukkot*, one begins learning its *Halachot*. This thirty-day period should also be utilized to ensure that the *Chag* needs of the poor are met, as well as planning *Sukkot* festivities.

16 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo. The third and fourth chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited by all. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

18 Elul – The birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Baal Hatanya. On this day, the Chabad *Rebbeim* would wish one a "Chag Sameach".

The last 12 days of Elul (18-29 Elul) correspond to the 12 months of the year. On each of these days, one should make a reckoning of the corresponding month, and make all necessary corrections.

23RD ELUL "SHABBAT MEVARCHIM"

Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim - Vayelech. We don't bentch the new month before Musaf, however Av Harachamim is recited. The Baal Shem Tov explains that Hashem Himself bentches the month of Tishrei, and with this power, we bentch the other months of the year.

Many make a kiddush after davening, in honor of "Shabbat Mevarchim".

Tzidkatecha is recited.

One learns the final two chapters of Pirkei Avot after Mincha. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

Vi'hi Noam and V'atah Kaddosh are omitted on Motzei Shabbat.

SELICHOT

Due to the very varied customs on Selichot, we advise everyone to make themselves familiar with their own particular customs.



The Jewish Weekly

will be releasing a Tishrei guide of Stories, Halachot and Minhagim