



Bet Horaah

בית הוראה

Shaarei Ezra

שערי עזרא

Parshat Shemot

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 4:24pm

Shabbat ends: 5:29pm

R"T 5:56pm

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TRAVELING TO ISRAEL AMIDST CHALLENGING TIMES:

WRITTEN BY RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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As the winter vacation rapidly approaches, many individuals aspire to travel to the Holy Land. However, concerns persist about potential dangers, instilling fear among those contemplating the journey. If there is indeed a perceived danger, some may question the halachic permissibility of such travel, considering the Torah's directive to prioritize the preservation of life.

It is stated in the gmarah (Shabbat 32a): "A person should never place himself in a dangerous situation, relying on the hope that a miracle will be performed for him, as perhaps a miracle will not happen. And even if a miracle is performed for him, it will be deducted from his merits." Moreover, one who enters a dangerous situation is destined to face heavenly judgment, as mentioned in the Sefer Chassidim (תרע"ה), which states, "Yet, only your blood will I require" – if a person dies due to his transgressions, such as engaging in a quarrel that leads to his death, he is destined to face judgment for causing his own demise. Similarly, if he goes into a hazardous place, like walking on ice in winter and falling into water, leading to drowning, or if someone enters an old and dilapidated house, and it collapses on him while inside, or if he engages in a dispute with a violent individual, provoking and infuriating them, resulting in injuries— all these individuals are destined to face judgment for causing their own deaths through their confrontations with others, playing with the inevitable. Thus, we learn that a person should avoid entering hazardous places. Certainly, at first glance, it appears that a person should refrain from willingly exposing themselves to potential danger, as the Torah instructs, "Beware for yourself; and guard your soul". The Rambam writes;] פרק יא מהלכות רוצח ושמירת הנפש ה"ד) "any obstacle that poses a danger to life, one is commandment to remove it, be cautious of it, and be careful with things that are good, as it is said, "Take care for yourself, and guard your soul. We also find similarly in Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 427:8 and 7).

However, a question arises here, as we find many instances where there is no prohibition against taking risks. On the contrary, our sages employed language instilling a sense of security. For example (Shabbat 105a; Ketubot 104a) Chazal used the expression "שומר פתאים השם" (Hashem protects the innocent) implies that a person can walk innocently with Hashem and not worry about impending dangers.



Poskim have elucidated several distinctions to provide clarity on when to be concerned about potential danger and when to proceed confidently.

Distinction between Certain and Uncertain Dangers:

Sefer Binyan Tsion (סימן קל"ז) and Rav Menashe Klien In Mishneh Halachot (ח"ה סי' רל"ד) wrote that a distinction is made between a clear and visible danger and probable danger. Regarding clear and visible danger, we do not say "Shomer Petaim Hashem" or "שומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע", "(A person who performs a mitzvah should not come to harm), as the power of nature is strong, and one should not expect a miracle to save him. For example, if an individual is seriously ill and has been medically advised by a doctor and a rabbi to eat on Yom Kippur, but they choose not to consume food, asserting, "I am observing the commandment of fasting," and as a result, they succumb to the illness, they bear responsibility for their own life. Contrary to this, if there is only a potential danger that could arise, there is a possibility in certain situations to say "Shomer Petaim."

Therefore, according to this approach we need to evaluate the situation before us, considering whether the danger is imminent or remote. The current situation in Israel does not pose an imminent and certain danger (and hopefully, things will improve), but at most, it is a doubt.

On the contrary, driving through an Arab village poses a real and existing threat, which one must avoid by halachic means. Therefore, an example would be a reporter who walks into such a

TRAVELING TO ISRAEL AMIDST CHALLENGING TIMES:

village, violating this prohibition.

Distinction between Danger for Most and Danger for Few:

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (ח"י מ סימן ע) offers a bit different approach; he emphasizes a distinction between activities that pose danger to the majority, warranting caution and refraining, and those where most individuals are safe. In instances where the majority remains unaffected, the approach of "Shomer Petaim" (relying on the presumption of safety) can be taken. For instance, consuming fatty meat or very spicy foods may be harmful to some but not to most; in such cases, one may eat and trust that they will be safe. Conversely, engaging in activities that are generally harmful, such as a diabetic consuming sugary item, should be avoided. Since such actions are dangerous for the majority with that condition, one cannot rely on the assumption that all will be fine.

Accordingly, one needs to assess whether traveling to Israel is safe for the majority, and the answer is affirmative. The majority of people in Israel are safe.

We still need to inquire about the leniency applied in places where the risk level is low. Normally, we adhere to the principle of "safek nefashot lekula," meaning that even if the danger is low, we must take all necessary precautions and even violate the Sabbath in a scenario where there might be a risk, even if it's low.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman (קובץ שיעורים, כתובות קלו) asserts that the principle of "safek nefashot lekula" does not apply to one's normal way of life. This means that one may continue living normally without changing the course of life even if there is a minor risk involved. However, if the risk becomes visible and real, precau-

tions must be taken in any event.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman explains that one may go about his life without excessive worry, relying on Hashem to protect him. Any action that is part of our daily routine doesn't need to be stopped unless there is a sudden imminent danger. However, when we want to do something out of the norm, that is when one needs to assess the risk.

To comprehend this, it's crucial to acknowledge that virtually every action in life involves some level of risk. For instance, driving has the potential for accidents, walking in the street may expose us to potential attacks, and even staying in a building carries the risk of it collapsing. Nevertheless, we do not live in constant fear because we recognize that Hashem controls the world, and if harm befalls us, it is by His decree. However, this understanding does not grant permission to deliberately enter dangerous places, relying solely on the belief that Hashem will save us. In such instances, it is considered tempting fate, as it implies letting nature take its course, potentially leading to harm. Summarizing the above, it appears permissible to travel to Israel when people are leading a normal way of life without excessive worry about potential danger. However, this does not grant permission to walk through places which aren't as safe, such as Arab quarters in Jerusalem or visit Hebron, where the danger is greater.

Another aspect worth noting is the unclear safety comparison between being in cities like New York, where there are Arabs in every corner, and Israel. In such cases, moving from one potentially dangerous area to another may not significantly alter the level of risk.

Body Language of Love: Hugging and Kissing Our Children.

"ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלתם" (שמות ב, יא).
וירא בסבלתם- נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מצר עליהם (רש"י).

There are numerous ways to express love to someone close, such as your child or grandchild. One way is to express love through gift-giving, as demonstrated by Yaakov when he gave Yosef the ketonet pasim as an expression of his love. In our Torah portion (Shemot), we discover one method of expressing love and care, while in the preceding Torah portion (Vayechi), we were introduced to a different approach.

Young Moshe departs from his palace to the field and witnesses the enslavement of the nation. Instead of turning a blind eye to their suffering, he takes decisive action. Rashi notes that Moshe "puts his eyes and heart to it". This phrase suggests that he not only cared about them in his heart but also expressed his concern through his gaze—a form of communication where one conveys care through their eyes. When dealing with a whole nation, physical gestures like hugs might not be feasible or appropriate. Therefore, Moshe expresses his compassion through his eyes, using a facial expression that radiates affection and warmth, conveying his deep care for the people he witnessed suffering.

However, among family members, such as one's children and grandchildren, the most powerful way to express love is through hugging and kissing. When Yaakov Avinu prepares to bless his grandchildren before his passing, he seeks to convey his profound love for them. Due to Yaakov's blindness at that

stage of his life, expressing love through eye contact was not possible. Similarly, he couldn't bestow gifts as another means of expressing affection. Consequently, he turns to Yosef and requests him to bring the grandchildren close for the blessing. As Menashe and Ephraim are brought, Yaakov embraces them, hugging and kissing them for an extended period, as he wouldn't let go. The testimony to this is that the verse mentions Yosef physically having to remove them from Yaakov's lap.



Hugging is a powerful form of nonverbal communication that expresses love, affection, and emotional connection. The body language associated with hugging conveys several key messages:

1. Warmth and Affection: A hug involves a sense of affection. It's a way of expressing care and love without the need for words.
2. Comfort and Support: A hug provides comfort and support, especially during difficult or emotional times. The act of embracing someone can be reassuring and make them feel safe and protected.
3. Bonding and Connection: Hugging fosters a sense of bonding and connection between individuals. It creates closeness that reinforces emotional ties and strengthens relationships.
4. Nonverbal Communication: Hugs can convey emotions that may be challenging to express verbally. They are a nonverbal way of saying, "I care about you," "You're important to me," or "I'm here for you."

Moreover, hugs serve as a genuine expression of emotions.

BODY LANGUAGE OF LOVE: HUGGING AND KISSING OUR CHILDREN.

While words can be insincere and gifts may be given without true sentiment, hugging and kissing someone you don't have genuine affection for is challenging. In the interaction between Yaakov and Esav, where Esav hugs and kisses Yaakov, Rashi notes that although Esav typically harbors animosity towards Yaakov, in that specific moment, he displayed genuine affection. This aligns with our understanding that hugs are typically sincere and reflect the true sentiments of the moment.

Even when Lavan hugged Yaakov with the intention of searching for hidden gold and jewelry, the act itself was executed with a form of affection. However, this affection was directed not towards Yaakov but towards the valuable items. In essence, Lavan's hugs were more of an expression of attachment to the jewelry rather than genuine affection for Yaakov.

As mentioned, it's plausible that given Yaakov's advanced age and limited abilities at that point in his life, he had only one means to convey his love to them. Being nearly blind, he couldn't gaze at them with the needed expression of love. Furthermore,

he couldn't offer them material gifts, as being the children of the king, they likely possessed everything. The unique and irreplaceable love of a grandfather is a gift that only a parent or grandparent can give, unlike any other. Recognizing this, Yaakov sought to ensure that his grandchildren received a generous portion of that love before his passing. Similarly to the situation with Moshe, when the nation was in a state of distress, having the king's son from the palace comforting them was invaluable. They undoubtedly felt supported by his genuine care.

In our modern era, we can draw parallels to this message, especially during challenging times. Numerous world leaders have demonstrated their support for the Jewish nation in various events. Whether by visiting Israel to express solidarity or participating in events like the Israel Rally in Washington, where many official leaders showed their support, such gestures should not be taken lightly. This backing has uplifted many during times of crisis.

TEFILLIN - THE OBLIGATION FOR COMPLETE SQUARENESS.

In Gmara (Menachot, page 45a), it is stated: "The laws of square-shaped Tefillin are a Halacha L'emoshe mi' Sinai- meanings it's transmitted to Moshe from Sinai. The Gmara explains that this refers to their stitching and the Bayit angle."

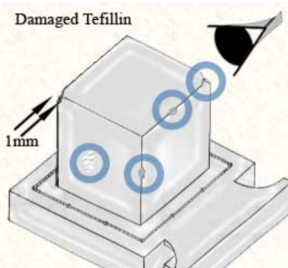
Thus there are three squares that must be present in Tefillin:

1. The square of the Ktsitsa- the house (the compartment containing the parchment).
2. The square of the Titura- the bottom part extending from the Ktsitsa. The Titura must form a complete square both on the top and the bottom.
3. The square of the stitching.

As the dimensions of the batim must be equal in length and width, and the length of the diagonal must be equal to the dimensions of the length and width with an additional $\frac{2}{5}$, one should carefully inspect if the batim appear as an exact square on both the top and bottom. Since most people may not have the discerning eye to accurately judge whether the square is off, as it might appear fine to the untrained observer when, in reality, it is not, it is advisable to seek the opinion of a sofer or a batim macher. These professionals deal with such batim regularly and can accurately assess their quality.

Many times, the batim may appear to open due to their weak construction or if worn with wet hair, causing the compartments to open up. The openings are not necessarily considered pasul (invalid) if one can manually tighten the divisions with their fingers, restoring them to their square shape, as some poskim per-

mit this. It is strongly advisable to fix or change them, as some poskim consider them invalid. To obtain a ruling on such a matter, it is advisable to consult with a batim macher, an expert in this field.



Although we require the batim to be a perfect square, there is no specific requirement for the height of the batim. One can make the height much higher and it remains kosher and mehudar.

A common question pertains to the corners of the batim. Since it is typical for the batim to come into contact with walls or fall, the corners may become smashed and lose their sharpness. While the corners don't need to be extremely sharp, having them very sharp is considered a hidur (Ben Ish Chai in sefer Od Yosef Chai, Chayei Sarah 8). If the batim corners become excessively rounded, they might be considered pasul. To determine the extent of what is considered pasul, one should consult a professional sofer.

On an average-sized pair of tefillin, if there is a gap in the square of up to 1% we can be lenient, some opinions allow up to 2%. However, if the gap is larger than that, it is considered not square. This measurement should be done using a caliper.

Since the sewings must be square as well, some poskim caution that on the angles, they should be very close. This means that one should avoid drilling big holes to allow the sewing to go through, as on the angles, the sewing will be far apart and lack the connection needed to be considered square.

SHNAYIM MIKRA, ECHAD TARGUM:

"ואלה שמות בני ישראל: כתבו הראשונים כי בפסוק זה נרמז מצות חכמינו לקרוא שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום בראשי תיבות: ו'חייב אדם לקרות הפרשה שנים מקרא ואחת תרגום;

"And these are the names of the children of Israel." This pasuk hints the obligation of 'Shnayim Mikra ve-echad Targum,' represented by the initials: Shin (ש) for 'Shnayim' (two), Mem (מ) for 'Mikra' (Scripture), Vav (ו) for 'Ve' (and), Alef (א) for 'Achat' (one),

Tav (ת) for 'Targum' (translation). Thus, a person is obligated to read the portion twice in Scripture and once in translation.

Commencing the Book of Shemot serves as a poignant reminder for us to align ourselves with the practice of Shnayim Mikra, Echad Targum—reading the weekly Torah portion twice accompanied by the translation of Onkelos.

The Gemara (ברכות ה,ב) states that an individual should

SHNAYIM MIKRA, ECHAD TARGUM:

consistently conclude their Torah portions in sync with the congregation. The congregation reads a specific Torah portion each Shabbat, and in the week leading up to that Shabbat, it is incumbent upon each person to read the Torah text of the weekly portion twice and its translation once.

The Gemara also provides an incentive, affirming that one who aligns the completion of their Torah portions with the congregation is rewarded with an extension of their days and years. Early poskim have presented various reasons to elucidate the establishment of this practice by Chazal. Let's enumerate some of these explanations:

Torah understanding:

Sefer Chinuch, in its introduction, articulates that the purpose behind Shnayim Mikra, Echad Targum is to enhance the reader's comprehension of the Torah portion. By reading the parsha in one's home with this approach, a deeper understanding and enlightenment regarding the content can be achieved.

The Rosh (אורחות חיים יום ב' אות לז) as well suggests that the intent behind the reading is to enable greater precision in one's study. In essence, part of a person's obligation in Torah study is to engage in Shnayim Mikra, Echad Targum, fostering a more meticulous and in-depth examination of the verses being read.

complete the entire Torah:

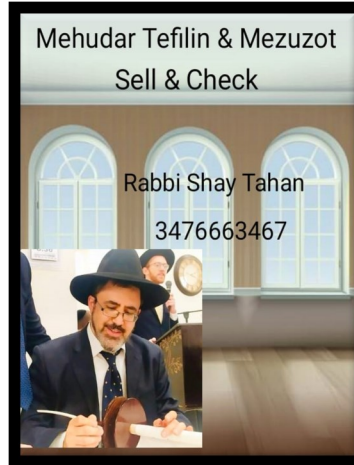
Trumat HaDeshen (שאלה כג), citing the Ramban, asserts that the purpose of this reading practice is for an individual to personally

complete the entire Torah within the year, paralleling the congregation's accomplishment of finishing the reading of the entire Torah.

Becoming fluent with the parasha:

Trumat HaDeshen also notes Rabbi Chananel's perspective, who contends that the reason behind this practice is to become proficient and fluent in the weekly Torah reading. The Levush (א"ח סימן ז, א"א, ר) expressed the same viewpoint.

BH next week we'll learn the Halachot of Shnayim Mikra



הסתרת זהות יהודית

הם. ולכן אין נוהגים כמו מה שכתבו הפוסקים שאסור ללבוש בגדי עובד כוכבים בדרך. והנה להסתיר שמן יהודי דינו קל יותר מהא דלעיל, כיון ששם היה הדיון אם רשאי אדם ללבוש בגדי עובדי כוכבים שבה ניכר שהוא גוי, וכגון שלבוש כאפיה על צווארו וכדו', אולם להסתיר שממנים יהודים מובהקים וכגון את הכיפה או את הפאות תחת כובע אין בזה איסור וביחוד במקום סכנה. וכן הביאו כמה פוסקים להתיר להסיר כיפה במקום צורך גדול וכגון שהולך לפגישת עבודה אם נראה לו שאם לא ישב בגילוי ראש בלא כיפה לא יקבלוהו למשרה. (אגרות משה א"ח ח"ד סימן ב')

ולגבי איסור אמירת "גוי אני" הסביר הגר"ש אלישיב (אשרי האיש יו"ד ח"א עמוד צב) שזה נאסר רק אם רוצים שישנה דתו, אבל אם אין כוונתם לזה רשאי לומר כן במקום צורך גדול. ונתן לזה דוגמה שאם היה מטופל בבית חולים במקום ששונאים יהודים, רשאי לומר שהוא גוי במקום פיקוח נפש על מנת לקבל טיפול טוב, וזאת מכיון שאין הרופאים מנסים לגרום לו לשנות דתו. ואם כן גם לענינו כיון שאין מנסים לגרום לו להחליף דתו, כל שכן שרשאי לכסות בגדיו שכן הנידון הזה קל יותר מדלעיל.



שולם לרב. אני צריך לנסוע לטיול עסקים במקום שיש בו הרבה ערבים, ומכיון שהיום איזור כזה נחשב במקום סכנה ארצה לחבוש כובע רגיל וכן לשנות את מלבושי כדי שלא יהיה שאני יהודי. חבר עורר אותי שיתכן שאסור ליהודי להסתיר את זהותו ורציתי לברר איך עלי לנהוג?

שולם וברכה. אכן הרמ"א (יו"ד סימן קנז ס"ב) הביא בשם האשר"י והנמוקי יוסף ועוד פוסקים שאסור לאדם לשנות לבושו על מנת להסתיר את זהותו היהודי, אולם הוא חילק ואסר רק אם המקום אינו מקום סכנה, אבל במקום סכנה מותר לשנות לבושו. וכן כתב בשולחן ערוך שם: "אסור לאדם לומר שהוא עובד כוכבים כדי שלא יהרגוהו, אבל אם כדי שלא יכירוהו שהוא יהודי משנה מלבושו בשעת הגדרה מותר כיון שאינו אומר שהוא עובד כוכבים". והש"ך (שם ס"ק יט) הביא שהאידיא נהוג להקל בכל זה, וכתב שהב"ח גם התיר כשהולך בדרך וישנה סכנה לישראל באותן הדרכים שרשאי לשנות מלבושו, והוסיף שכן נהוג רוב הסוחרים והולכי דרכים. והאידיא נהוג כן בכל הדרכים משום דכל הדרכים בחזקת סכנה

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