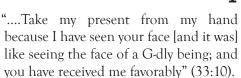
Cincinnati Torah מסינסי

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Vayishlach

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Evil Faces, Evil Spirits



These are the words that Yaakov used to urge Eisav to accept his generous gift. Rashi explains that he was hinting that he was unafraid of Eisav since he already saw the face of Eisav's angel and done battle with him. What was Yaakov's point in mentioning the face of the angel? What was he trying to convey?

R' Dovid Hoffman, in his sefer Torah Tavlin, suggests an answer based on the words of Chazal (Megillah 28b): "A man is forbidden to gaze into the face of a wicked man." The Maharal explains that a person's face reflects his character. An evil person has impure spirits resting on

him, and if one would look at him, he too would be influenced by the spirit.

R' Eliyahu Lopian explains this concept and says that our sight is a spiritual property in the brain that is connected by nerves to our eyes. If we look at an evil person, his impure spirits enter and harm our spirituality. This is why *Chazal* forbade us from gazing at a wicked person. If one would transgress this prohibition, he would later notice various improper or evil thoughts passing through his mind, which originated with the evil person's spirit.

Yaakov was telling Eisav: You can bring your best warriors, but I'm not afraid of you. I saw the face of your angel and defeated him in combat. As for you? I refuse to even look at your evil face.



Mazal Tov to

to the Daf HaShavua Chabura on their completion of Maseches Moed Katan this past week!

Mark your calendar for the Kollel's Chanuka Event

Monday January 23rd second night of Chanuka

at the CHDS Golf Manor Campus.

Look out for details to follow. Sponsorships available.

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Where in *halacha* do we only rely on a child?

See reverse side for the answer

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

We spoke in the past how all men should make every effort to daven all tefillos with a minyan, for tefillah b'tzibur is much more than a preferred course of action—it is a Rabbinic obligation (O.C. 90:9 & Igros Moshe O.C. 2:27).

A question that often comes up is: How many people must be finished with Shemoneh Esrei (Amidah) before the sheliach tzibur (chazan) may begin chazaras hashatz (repetition)?

As with many areas in *halacha*, the answer is not clear cut.

Ideally, the chazan should wait for all the men to finish before repeating Shemoneh Esrei (O.C. 55:7 and Aruch Hashulchan 13). However, since many men take longer with their davening (prayers), and waiting for them would inconvenience the congregation, it is permitted to begin as long as the Rav (rabbi) and the majority of men having finished. But if that, too, delays chazaras hashatz unduly, then the congregation may authorize the sheliach tzibur to begin the repetition as soon as there are nine men (in addition to him) who will be able to answer Amen to his repetition (Ramoh O.C. 124:3).

It could happen, though, that the congregation is very impatient, and unwilling to wait for even nine men plus the *chazan*. Whether it is permitted for *chazaras hashatz* to commence with fewer than nine men answering is debated by the *poskim*. Some hold that it is not allowed under any circumstances (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 20:2 based on the *Taz* 55:4), others permit it if eight people (plus the *chazan*) are answering (*Chayei Adam* 29:1), while yet other *poskim* allow it even if there are only five people (plus the *chazan*) who are

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Cincinnati Torah

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

CONTINUED

finished with their Shemoneh Esrei (Elya Rabbah quoted in the MB 55:32, Aruch Hashulchan 55: based on the view of the Magen Avraham 55:8).

The Mishna Brurah does not rule explicitly on this issue. Therefore, in a perfect world, one should follow the strict opinion and wait for nine others to finish their Shemoneh Esrei before beginning. Under extenuating circumstances, however, we may rely on the more lenient views and begin the repetition with eight or even five others.

The above discussion is about chazaras hashatz only. By Maariv (and some places by Mincha) where Kaddish is recited after Shemoneh Esrei, the rules are more relaxed. It appears that the minhag (custom) is to begin Kaddish as soon as there are five others who have completed their Shemoneh Esrei.

IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

Following World War I, the countries of Poland and Lithuania were granted their independence. This led to bitter squabbling about the border city of Vilna, which both countries claimed as their own. The city was originally awarded to Lithuania, but was boldly annexed by Poland in 1920. Poland immediately began to expand the infrastructure of roads and rail lines into Vilna to increase its hold on the city. These roads would later prove crucial for the large number of refugees fleeing Poland. In 1939, when the Germans and Soviets made a treaty to carve up Poland between themselves, they inexplicably offered the city of Vilna back to the Lithuanians. The offer came with a price tag; Lithuania would have to agree to allow Soviet military bases in its country. Eventually,

GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL









Lithuania was pressured into signing the treaty and Vilna was returned. Jews who now found themselves under Soviet occupation and were fearful of the Soviet hatred of Iews and religion now had an avenue of escape. Due to this transfer, the border between Soviet-controlled Poland and the city of Vilna was left open and allowed for Vilna to become a temporary haven. News of the gap in the border spread and Jews, and especially yeshiva students who feared the Soviets the most, began to stream into Vilna. The entire yeshiva of Mir, Poland, fearing that they would be apprehended and arrested, left in the middle of the night. The Lithuanian government, in order to ease the overcrowding in Vilna, ordered all

yeshivos to move further into Lithuania. Soon afterward the border was sealed. The refugees did not get comfortable in their new homes, as the Communist party in Lithuania was very powerful and the Soviet military bases were a constant reminder that it was only a matter of time until their haven would as well be swallowed by the Soviets. The refugees and those who were already Lithuanian citizens still looked for an avenue of escape. To be continued...

RIDDLE ANSWER

If there is a letter in a Torah scroll that is questionable if it is written clearly enough, a child is asked what letter he sees.

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

As Jews poured into America in the late 1800s and Orthodox Rabbis were hired to lead the new communities of immigrants, one sect did not have immediate success in establishing itself in the New World. The first person to attempt to establish a *Chassidic* court in America was R' Eliezer Chaim Rabinowitz, a descendant of the Baal Shem Tov and a son of the *tzaddik* R' Boroch of Yampol, in approximately 1892. Although he did achieve some measure of renown, he was not able to attract many true followers, and the hostility towards him in the Yiddish newspapers drove him out of New York and back to Europe. As more *Chassidim* immigrated, more attempts were made to bring a *Chassidic* leader to America. None were willing to leave their followers in Europe until the upheaval of World War I caused several to seek safety in America. Still, they did not find many followers. Even the most popular among them, the Tolner Rebbe, R' Mordechai Dovid Twersky, did not hold the usual Friday night *Tisch* gathering, which was a staple of *Chassidic* courts, due to lack of interest. As one social critic pithily wrote about this American mindset, "The men [of America] were given more to the contemplation of the dishes set before them than of their leader's greatness and sanctity."

SOURCES: Even, Isaac. "Chassidism in the New World." The Jewish Communal Register of New York City. 1918. pp. 341-346.

