



## All Alone

Rabbi Yosef Dovid Rothbart, Rabbinic Administrator

החלצו מאתכם אנשים לצבא... לתת נקמת ה' במדין  
(פרק לא פסוק א)

So how can a Jewish soldier looking to conquer more and more territory for *Hashem* defend himself against the passionate enemy?

Someone recently asked me to give an example of how the *yetzer hora* may challenge a person after he has already begun performing a *mitzva*. The implication was that once a person has already decided to perform a *mitzva* and has begun to do so, he was successful in overcoming his evil inclination and need not worry until the completion of the good deed. For only then will the vanquished *yetzer hora* don his dented armour and head off to the battle field for a second bout.

The *Tanya* though tells us that the opposite is true. The relationship between the Jew and his evil inclination is comparable to two countries at war. A good deed is tantamount to the capture of land in the territory of the *yetzer hora* and a sin the opposite. When one army begins to advance into the other territory – when a Jew begins to perform a *mitzva*, the defending army – the *yetzer hora*, invests all its resources into defending its land and pushing out the invaders. Indeed, it is *after* one begins performing a *mitzva* that he faces his fiercest adversary.

The Kotzker Rebbe is famous for saying that “there are three inns that a person visits during his earthly journey: The Inn of Jealousy, the Inn of Desire, and the Inn of Glory. I managed to leave the first two fairly quickly and have never returned. But the third, the Inn of Glory, I struggled mightily to leave, until I felt that my very veins were snapping.”

The soldiers who pass the first wave of defenders and begin to advance must be wary of the third inn. The army that they face inside the enemy borders will aggressively attempt to force them to retreat, trapping them in the Inn of Glory, where they will be vulnerable and eventually cut down.

The Degel Machane Efraim offers the following strategy: Battle alone. Do not attempt to advance publicly. Not physically alone; rather, ובמקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש (מסכת אבות, פרק ב) – in order to be an *Ish*, a champion, attempt to envision yourself in a place unaccompanied; void of other people. A solo warrior will be much less prone to be pushed back into the Inn of Glory. Someone whose entire reality consists of himself and his creator will find that personal glory is not a focus, and indeed, only the glory of *Hashem* is real. And he will be able to perform a *mitzva* for its own sake.

The grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov tells us that this tactic could be found in the instructions that Moshe gave the Jewish soldiers that marched against Midyan in this week's *Parsha*. החלצו (lit. Arm from among you men for the army... to carry out the revenge of *Hashem* in Midyan) – remove from yourself men – visualize yourself in a place where no one else is with you. Imagine that you are alone and only *Hashem* is there to see you. And then you will be to fight solely with the intention of avenging the honour of *Hashem* and not for any other intention. For as the Kotzker Rebbe said “Everything must be done for the sake of Heaven – even actions done for the sake of Heaven.”

# Praying for Success

In the last publication: Kalfon had finally made it financially. He had a successful store which sold to the highest echelons of society. This took him away from growing spiritually and his wife was very unhappy. Nothing she said changed Kalfon's schedule and she needed a new plan. She decided to engage the help of her neighbour, Rav Chai Tayeb. The next morning Rav Tayeb invited Kalfon to join him for learning and davening and Kalfon could not refuse.

After Kalfon finished learning and davening the first time in many months, he rushed to his store to open up. He had already "lost" a few hours and he needed to "salvage" the time that he had. Thoughts of people knocking on the locked door and choosing somewhere else to shop plagued him spurring him to skip breakfast and grab a snack to eat between customers.

He arrived at the store breathless and opened up wondering just how many of his regulars he had lost. But soon enough a customer arrived and his attention shifted to him. This was not the typical customer. He came in the form of an emissary of the royal family. Maybe this was his reward for his learning he told himself as he directed the royal messenger to the most expensive part of the store.

The royal representative finished choosing what he needed and Kalfon packed up his wagon calculating the profits as he did so. Thanking Kalfon, the emissary complimented him on his selection and began to board the wagon. Kalfon politely asked about payment.

The messenger stared at Kalfon for a second before replying angrily, "We already paid you, do you want to deceive the royal court?" Stunned and feeling sick, Kalfon locked up the store for the day and went home dejected.

He entered his house and turned to his wife bitterly, "See, I just went to daven one day and look what happened."

The next day at 4:45 an hour earlier than the day before, someone knocked on the door. Rav Chai Tayeb stood in the doorway waiting to take Kalfon to learn and daven. Without a choice, Kalfon quickly dressed and dragged himself after his illustrious neighbour.

After davening, he opened his store and an elegantly dressed lady arrived and "bought" many goods. He loaded her cart for her and then went to present her with the balance. In those few moments, the lady stepped onto her carriage and instructed her driver to drive leaving Kalfon with an invoice for an unknown patron. Another

day of spiritual growth and another day of big loses. Kalfon returned home crestfallen.

He had had enough. He saw a direct correlation between his learning and davening and his losing money and he told himself that it could not continue. He knew though that he would not be able to tell Rav Chai that he had too much respect for his rabbinic neighbour to say that he was unavailable and he needed another plan. Finally, he concluded that there was only one way. He would leave the house before the dreaded knock came.

The next morning he woke up at three-thirty. He dressed quickly and packed himself breakfast. Feeling free, he opened up the door at four o'clock, stepped out of the house breathing the fresh night air, and bumped right into Rav Tayeb.

"Early," he stammered at the elegant figure blocking his way. Without any surprise Rabbi Chai reassured him, "There is a *shuir* in the *Mishnah*, *Gemara* and *Zohar* and we need to get there without delay."

That day he opened his store the latest time since his new schedule. He did not rush as he had in the past two days due to his premonition of what was going to happen. At ten o'clock a young officer arrived and picked out a lot of merchandise. Kalfon was not taking any chances and presented the officer a bill before letting him take anything out of the store. The officer took out his wallet and began to apologize. He had left his cow somewhere else and was going to leave his wallet and merchandise at the store until he could bring his cow.

Kalfon waited the entire afternoon, but the officer did not return. Eventually he had to close the store. He put away the merchandise, took the wallet and started to walk home relieved that nothing was taken that day.

On his way home he met Rav Chai. "Everything you have lost is now in your pocket." He told the shocked Kalfon. "When a person wants to be grown, the forces of impurity wage war against him. On the first day the royal emissary was the *Satan* in disguise. On the second day it was his wicked wife. They were testing to see if you would persist in learning and davening. I realized this and decided to intervene. Today the officer was a *malach* that came to pay for the goods they were taken from you. Blessed are you who overcame the test."

## How Can H.I.T. Help You?

Are you close to signing a lease on an apartment or home? Oftentimes, contracts have clauses that involve Ribbis or other Halachic concerns.

To discuss your contract or have it reviewed please call (416) 535-8008 or email [info@halachainstitute.com](mailto:info@halachainstitute.com)



# Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

**My friend went to the store to pick up something for me. The total cost of the item was \$8.67. I wanted to give him 10 dollars and let him keep the change but he insisted that he did not want to since doing so is a prohibition of *ribbis*. Is that true?**

When your friend used his own money to buy an item on your behalf, he is essentially lending you money. The *Minchas Yitzchak* (IV, 88) writes that if someone wants to pay back a loan and does not have exact change so he lets the lender “keep the change”, there would be an issue of *ribbis*. Only when the amount of change is totally insignificant to the borrower and the lender would the added change not be considered *ribbis*.

Even saying that the money is a gift is not an acceptable *heter*, unless the two parties involved are close relatives (such as a father and son) who normally give gifts to each other and it is clear that the additional money is truly a gift.

Had you given your friend 10 dollars before he went to purchase the item then you would be allowed to let him keep the change as no loan ever took place.

The *Poskim* suggest two different ways to pay back your friend without having to look for exact change. The first option is to have your friend buy the item at the time of purchase and then resell it to you as there would not be a loan at all. (However, you would have to be careful regarding *Ona'ah*.) The second option would be to give the extra as a reimbursement for the effort expended to go to the store.

**What should I do if I accidentally put on pants that were washed and not worn before the nine days?**

If you realize right away you should take it off. However, if you only realize after you have worn it for a while (20 – 30 minutes), then you do not need to take it off since at that point it is no longer considered to be fresh.

**Can I wash my *shaitel* during the nine days?**

Washing a *shaitel* is the same as washing a garment and may not be done during the entire nine days if you are *Ashkenazi*.

**To have your question answered call**

**H.I.T. at (416) 535-8008  
or email**

**[info@halachainstitute.com](mailto:info@halachainstitute.com)**





## In Parshas Ma'asei the Torah delineates the borders of Eretz Yisrael. Here are some interesting facts about country borders.

- In 1816, the USA began building a fort to protect from Canadian invasion, but after two years it was discovered that it had been accidentally built in Canada. They abandoned construction and called it Fort Blunder.
- After the town of Naco was split in two by border patrol, the residents of Naco, Arizona, and Naco, Mexico started an annual tradition of having a volleyball match in April using the dividing fence as the net. The game is called "Wallyball".
- Ontario has a massive "border wall" of edible rabies vaccine baits to prevent rabid animals from entering from the US.

## RIDDLE



My friend recited the *bracha* of *shehakol* and bit into a bright red tomato. I pointed out to him that he had recited the wrong *bracha*. He responded that the correct *bracha* was indeed *shehakol*. What was his reasoning?

Please send in your answers to [yrothbart@halachainstitute.com](mailto:yrothbart@halachainstitute.com). Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

**LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE:** Although the general rule is that when you are unsure whether you recited a rabbinic *bracha* you do not repeat the *bracha* because *safek brachos l'hakel*, there is an exception. What is that case?

**ANSWER:** There are a few possible answers for this riddle. We will mention two. 1) If a person is unsure whether he said *krias shma* or not. He must not only repeat *shema*, but the *brachos* as well (*Siman 67*). 2) If a person is not sure if he had recited *birkas hamazon*, he must repeat all four *brachos* although the fourth one is *d'rabanan* (*Mishna Berura 184, 13*).

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

**LAST WEEK'S WINNER:** Esther Gerstel

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.  
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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