



## הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד מרדכי מלכא שליט"א נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד  
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,  
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### Parashat Shlach

#### The Torah Way is to Lovingly Draw Others Close

##### Questions:

- 1) Our *parasha* relates the episode of the spies who were sent to *Eretz Yisrael*. Amongst them were Yehoshua ben Nun and Kalev ben Yefuneh. The Torah relates that Moshe prayed that Yehoshua be saved from the wicked plan of the spies, who wished to dissuade the Jewish Nation from entering the land. The Chafetz Chaim asks why Moshe prayed only on behalf of Yehoshua and not Kalev.
- 2) He furthermore asks that later in the *parasha*, Hashem punishes the Nation by decreeing not to allow them entry into *Eretz Yisrael*. However, about Kalev, Hashem states (13:24), "Since My servant Kalev had a different spirit and followed Me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land which he came from, and his descendants will inherit it." Why did Hashem not mention Yehoshua, who also remained loyal to Him?

##### Two Different Types of Behavior

The Chafetz Chaim answers that we must first understand how the Torah wishes that an individual interact with other people. When people do not act in accordance with the Torah, is the proper approach to protest and stay away from them, or to draw them closer to the Torah and gradually exert a positive influence over them? Each approach has a positive and negative aspect. By protesting wrongdoing and admonishing the perpetrators, one is guaranteed not to be influenced by them. However, in turn, he must be on guard, because the public will despise him and likely try to hurt him. The second approach is beneficial because it does not place him in physical danger, but he is at risk of being influenced by the sinners. The Chafetz Chaim explains that this was the difference between Yehoshua and Kalev. Yehoshua favored the first approach, and he outwardly displayed his opposition towards the plan of the spies. So even though he was not in spiritual danger, he was nevertheless in physical danger lest the spies try to injure him. This is why Moshe specifically prayed that Yehoshua should be saved. However, Kalev took the second approach. He drew close to them in hopes of exerting a positive influence. He wasn't in physical danger, yet he was at risk of being influenced by their evil ways and perspectives. Kalev therefore prayed by the graves of the Forefathers, asking to be saved from spiritual harm. The Chafetz Chaim concludes that both paths are acceptable as long as one's intentions are for the sake of Heaven.

It seems that we could still ask why Moshe prayed that Yehoshua be saved from physical harm, but did not pray that Kalev be saved from spiritual harm. Spiritual harm is worse than physical harm! It appears that since the risk was only posed due to his desire to draw others closer to Hashem, it was clear that he would not be harmed. This is why Moshe did not pray for Kalev.

##### Yehoshua Was Chosen to be the Leader

We mentioned above that Hashem praised the path of Kalev, saying that he had a "different spirit." We must therefore ask why in *Parashat Pinchas* (27: 15-18), Hashem told Moshe to appoint Yehoshua, "a man with a spirit inside of him," as the leader of the Jewish people and not Kalev. Perhaps we can explain according to what our Sages expound in the *Sifri Zuta* (27:18). They explain the words, "a man with a spirit inside of him," to mean that Yehoshua dealt with the strict according to their way and the mild-mannered according to theirs. Rashi explains similarly (*ibid.*), stating that Yehoshua would be able to act in a way befitting each personality he encountered. We see, then, that after Yehoshua heard that Hashem preferred Kalev's path and praised him for it, he worked on changing himself. Ultimately, he became someone who was able to warmly relate to each and every individual and not act zealously. In the merit of acting humbly and serving Moshe Rabbeinu, he filled the leadership role after him.

##### The Behavior of Shammai and Hillel



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I believe that the difference between these two paths can also be found in the approaches of Shammai and Hillel. In *Masechet Shabbat* (31a), the Gemara relates three different episodes that occurred with Shammai and Hillel: The first episode is about a gentile who approached Shammai and asked him how many Torahs the Jews have. Shammai responded that there were two, the *Torah She'bichtav* and the *Torah She'beal Peh*. The gentile stated that he believed only in the *Torah She'bichtav* and requested Shammai to convert him based on his acceptance of only the *Torah She'bichtav*. Shammai rebuked him and threw him out. He then came before Hillel, who converted him. The first day he began teaching him the *alef bet*. The next day, he reversed the order of the letters. The man asked that yesterday Hillel had taught him the letters in the opposite order. Hillel responded that the same way the man trusted him to teach him the letters in the correct order, so too, must he believe him about the validity of the *Torah She'beal Peh*.

The second episode also involves a gentile who came before Shammai and requested that he convert him. However, he pended his conversion on Shammai's teaching him the entire Torah while he stood on one foot. Shammai pushed him out with the staff he was holding. He then came before Hillel who converted him. He told him that what he despised he should not do to his friend, and that this was the entire Torah. The rest of the Torah is commentary on that principal, said Hillel, and he should go and learn it.

The third story is about another gentile who was passing in back of the *beit midrash*. He heard the sound of a teacher teaching small children. He was reading the *pasuk* that contained the instruction to make the clothing of the *kohen gadol*. Impressed by what he heard, he asked who these clothing were made for. He was told that they were for the *kohen gadol*. The gentile therefore said to himself that he would convert so that he could be appointed *kohen gadol*. He came before Shammai and requested to be converted, but on condition that he be appointed *kohen gadol*. Shammai pushed him out with his staff. He then came before Hillel, who converted him. Hillel said that someone can only be appointed to a leadership role if he has learned the way that a leader must act. Hillel told him to go learn about the proper conduct for a leader. He began to learn and eventually reached the *pasuk* which states that one who is not a kohen and performs the Temple service receives the death penalty. He asked Hillel to whom this *pasuk* refers, to which Hillel responded that it refers even to David HaMelech, since he was not a kohen. The convert then drew a *fortiori* about himself. He said that the Jews are referred to by the Torah as Hashem's children and out of His great love for them, Hashem calls them His first born son. Nevertheless, this admonition applies even to them. A convert therefore, who does not possess a Jewish lineage nor the merits of the Forefathers, how much more so does this warning apply to him? He returned to Shammai and told him that he now learned that he was unfit to be a *kohen gadol*, for the Torah forbade it. Then he came before Hillel and said to him, "Humble one, Hillel, blessing should rest upon your head, for you drew me beneath the wings of the Divine Presence." Sometime later, the three converts met and said that the strictness of Shammai nearly turned them away entirely, but the patience of Hillel drew them beneath the wings of the Divine Presence.

### The Roots of the Souls of Shammai and Hillel

We see from the Gemara that Shammai and Hillel had two different ways of acting. Shammai acted strictly and without compromise, similar to the way of Yehoshua. This takes on added significance according to the teaching of the *Arizal*, that Shammai was a *gilgul*, the reincarnation, of Yehoshua. We see, therefore, that Shammai was acting in accordance with the root of his soul. Hillel, however, acted more pleasantly, like Kalev had acted.

### Understanding the Converts' Words

The *Ben Ish Chai*, in his *sefer Ben Yehoyada*, asks why the converts only mentioned the characteristics of Shammai and Hillel after they met together. Why did each one not say this after his own individual episode? He answers that until they all met one another, each one assumed that his incident was an isolated one. They judged Shammai favorably and assumed that Shammai felt that they were not converting completely. He therefore pushed each one out, intending that they would regret their initial intentions and return to convert completely. However, after hearing that the situation repeated itself three times, they understood that Shammai was truly strict and wanted to turn them away entirely. For if his intention was truly for them to return to him, then after



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seeing that one did not return, he certainly would not have done it two more times! Rather, his intention was to banish them.

### Love People and Draw Them Close to Torah

Indeed, this is how Hillel the Elder, in *Pirkei Avot* (1:12), teaches us to draw individuals closer to the Torah. The Mishna states: "Hillel says, be from amongst the disciples of Aharon. Love peace, pursue peace, **love people, and draw them closer to Torah.**" This teaches us that to succeed in drawing people closer to Torah, one must first possess the trait of *ahavat ha'briyot*, loving mankind. For only when one speaks to another with warmth and love, can he touch his heart and influence him for the good. *Pirkei Avot* (6:1) furthermore teaches us in the name of Rebbe Meir that one who studies Torah *lishma*, for its own sake, acquires the trait of loving mankind, amongst others. The disciple of the Vilna Gaon, the Maggid from Polatchek (*ot* 29), after quoting the words of the *Tanna*, writes that one should examine himself and see if he possess these character traits. If one does, than it is proof that he studies Torah without any ulterior motives. However, if he does not, than he should not be overly proud of his Torah achievements nor should he display them to the public. The Mishna (*ibid.* 6:6) also teaches that the trait of loving mankind is a prerequisite for acquiring the Torah.

### Why the Jews Loved Aharon More Than Moshe

The *Midrash Tanchuma* (*Parashat Chukat*) teaches that because he possessed this trait, the Jews loved Aharon even more than Moshe. Moshe, states the Midrash, acted according to the strict letter of the law. Aharon, however, made peace between man and his fellow and between man and wife. If he would hear about anyone in the world who wished to transgress a sin at night, he would set out to find him. When he did, he would say, "My son, why are you walking alone on the way at this time? People might suspect you of something sinful. You my son, are a good man and from a family with esteemed lineage." He would warn him and get him to repent. All of the Jews loved Aharon, both men and women. This is why are Sages have said, "Be from the disciples of Aharon. Love peace, pursue peace, love people, and draw them closer to Torah." Therefore, when the Jews cried over Aharon for 30 days, the *pasuk* states (*Bamidbar* 20:29) that both men and women cried. However, following Moshe's passing it states that only the men cried.

### How Maran Taught to Act

There was a rabbi whose views sparked controversy. A prominent rav, R' Kassin, was opposed to them as was R' Ovadia. In a letter to R' Kassin (*Yabia Omer chelek* 10), Maran R' Ovadia instructed not to adhere to the views of the other rabbi. However, he advised not to alienate the rabbi since he was involved in educating the youth and drawing them close to the Torah in a pleasant way. Rather, he should follow the dictum of our Sages (*Sota* 47a) to distance another with the left hand, but to draw him closer with the right hand. The left hand is weaker, and one's reproach should not overpower his display of love for his fellow. He instructed to draw the rabbi close, so that he would continue teaching Jewish children Torah.

### Words of Mussar

From our *parasha* we have learned the correct path in dealing with the public. We must love them and draw them closer to Torah with warmth and compassion. With this, we can understand why Hashem specifically praised the path taken by Kalev. Kalev chose the path of drawing others close, and only by doing so, could he influence others. How much more so does this apply in present times, when many are inciting hatred against the Torah. It is clear that the proper way is to gradually draw distant Jews close and to influence them for the good. This will glorify the Torah in the world. However, one should not act disparagingly, for by doing so, he only serves to distance people. He may even disgrace the Torah and those who study it by acting in such a fashion. We see this in our times as well, as a segment of *bnei Torah* have chosen to act strictly and disparagingly by staging protests and generating hatred. We are taught that the way of the Torah is the opposite, as the *pasuk* states, "For all of its paths are paths of pleasantness, and all of its ways are ways of peace."

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rav Mordechai Malka



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