

**HALACHA V'HALICHA...** By Rav Chaim Schabes

The Chofetz Chaim writes: “We know that Hashem is the שומר ישראל (Watchman of Yisrael). Is He a שומר שכר (a paid watchman)? No! We don’t pay anything for His services; rather, Hashem is a שומר חנם (unpaid watchman). However, a שומר חנם does not have any obligation, and he only watches when he desires. That is what the Torah tells us: וְשָׂרָא בְּעֵרְוַת דְּבַר, וְשָׂרָא בְּעֵרְוַת דְּבַר, וְשָׂרָא בְּעֵרְוַת דְּבַר, וְשָׂרָא בְּעֵרְוַת דְּבַר (no nakedness should be seen in you, lest He turn away from you). The Torah is speaking about *tznius*. It is coming to teach us that when there is a lack of *kedusha* in our camp, Hashem retires himself from his position of שומר ישראל, *rachmana litzlan*, and we don’t want to hear what the consequences would *chas v’shalom* be”.

*Tzedaka* is a type of *nedder* (vow), and therefore the prohibition of לא תאחר לשלמו (delaying its fulfillment) applies to it also. If someone commits a quantity of money to *tzedaka*, or he says about specific bills or coins that they should become *tzedaka*, he is obligated to immediately transfer it to the *tzedaka* for which they were designated. If he did not specify a *tzedaka*, then they must be distributed to the poor immediately, and if one delays, he has transgressed the Torah commandment of לא תאחר (YD 257:3). If there are no poor people available, then he is only obligated to separate and set aside the money and have it ready for when the need will present itself; however, one is not obligated to seek out poor people to whom to distribute his *tzedaka* money, even if more than three *yamim tovim* have gone by (Shach *ibid*). All this is in reference to *tzedaka* that he was meant to personally give out, but when people make commitments of *tzedaka* in Shul, for the *gabbaim* to distribute, one does not transgress לא תאחר unless the *gabbai* has requested from him to give it, even if the need of the poor is present. Thereafter, one will immediately transgress the Torah prohibition if there is a present need, and the *gabbaim* would distribute it right away (Rama *ibid*). An individual does not have to have personal knowledge of the need, because it is a private matter that is not necessary to be disclosed; in a case when one happens to know that the need is not immediate, he will not transgress even if the treasurer has asked him for the payment of his pledge. If the *gabbai* of *tzedaka* is not aware of his commitment, one must make it known to him so that he should be able to make use of it when necessary. The Mordechai writes, that if the *tzedaka* was announced in Shul at an appeal, then it is not necessary for him to inform to the *gabbai*, since it was made public knowledge, and therefore, unless he is sent a bill for it, he will not transgress. All the above applies if a person separated money in a general way. However, a person is allowed to have an account of *tzedaka* money with the intention to give it out at his will as the needs may present themselves, and he will not transgress any prohibition if he takes his time in distributing it, or saving it for a later date; the reason is, because the Torah gave the person the benefit (*tovas hana’a*) of being able to distribute it at his discretion. The same holds true if he specifically designated the money to become a fund, or if he stipulated any other conditions at the time of the donation (for ex. if he donated it to be given to a specific poor person); in such cases everything follows those conditions, as in any other *nedder*.

**THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ...** By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (Y’shayahu 54:1-10)

This haftara’s focus is on the city of Yerushalayim. A person’s strong emotional connection with his home is recognized by Chazal in many instances. It is no wonder, then, that to be sent into exile is one of the harshest punishments that a person can receive. But imagine how much harsher it would make it if a person in exile finds out that there is no home left to which he can return, and no one left to greet him even if he were to manage to return!! With recent events in Eretz Yisrael and here in the United States fresh in our memories, remember that for over 2000 years the pain of *our galus* has been magnified by the status of Yerushalayim, our home! The *navi* speaks to that emptiness we have felt by describing the drastic turnaround the city will experience. Suddenly, people will come pouring into the city from all over the world! Yerushalayim’s boundaries will have to expand in all directions beyond its historical borders to make room for the multitudes and Hashem’s ‘moment of anger’ will be totally forgotten, replaced by His eternal kindness. While in the midst of this description the *navi* all of a sudden tells the Jews not to fear and not to be embarrassed. Afraid and embarrassed of what? The *navi* recognizes two thoughts that might hit us at this time, a fear of once again going into *galus* and the embarrassment of the actions that brought us into *galus* to begin with! Therefore the *navi* promises us that not only will we never again go into *galus*, but our sins will be wiped away so completely it will be as if they had never been. And to prove it, the *navi* compares his promise to the promise that Hashem made to Noach to never again destroy the world.

**LESSONS FROM OUR GEDOLIM:** A well-known *Darshan*, who was reputed to be less than scrupulous in his personal life, once came to Brisk; R’ Chaim refused to allow him to speak. The man came before R’ Chaim to complain: “Hear what I have to say, and you will find that my words are beyond reproach! My talks are based strictly on the Torah and Torah *hashkofos!*” R’ Chaim refused: “The people of Brisk should not be exposed to evil influences. Your words may be kosher; but even meat which was properly slaughtered, salted and soaked becomes *traif* if cooked in a non-kosher pot...”

**“A GIGANTIC LITTLE SECRET” ...** By Rabbi Yosef Schwab

The Torah tells us to appoint a king from “מִקְרֵב אֲחֵיךָ”. Embedded here is a *remez* to the fact that the kings of Israel will come from the tribe of Yehuda. The Ba’al Haturim notes that in *gematria* מִקְרֵב אֲחֵיךָ is equivalent to “משבט יהודה”, “from the tribe of Yehuda”, as the Torah promises (B’reishis 49:10) לֹא יִסּוּר שְׁבֵט מִיְהוּדָה.

