

ports. They began, however, by telling the people that "We came to the land where you did send us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey..."

The Talmud comments that "Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: Any piece of slander which does not have some truth in the beginning, will not endure in the end." Every lie has a little truth mixed into it. Unfortunately, all too often, the truth has a little falsehood mixed into it too.

Pursuit of truth is a recurring theme in Jewish tradition. The Torah is frequently referred to as the Torah of truth and the discernment of truth is seen as an essential requirement for navigating our way through life.

Live & Laugh

I was at a children's zoo with my children happily feeding the goats when I noticed a toddler shoving the pellets into his mouth. Scared that it could be dangerous I ran over to stop him, but before I could get there I heard his mother scolding him..."Don't eat those, they're not kosher!"

Calendar

Shabbos Mevorchim Tammuz
Molad: Shabbos 24 Jun 09:16:13

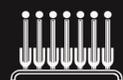
- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Shul Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
- ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim.**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:45 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 3
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 5:58 pm
- ◆ **Rosh Chodesh:** Sat 24 & Sun 25 Jun
- ◆ Mincha from Sunday 5:15 pm

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell** & available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows**.
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- ◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

Published by the
Sydenham Highlands North
Hebrew Congregation
Johannesburg, South Africa



17 Jun 2017 Parshas Shelach 23 Sivan 5777

Minority Truths

by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

In democracies as well as in Jewish Law, majority rules. A Beth Din must always consist of an odd number of judges lest there be a hung jury.

But, the fact is, sometimes the majority gets it wrong.

This week's story of the 12 spies sent by Moses to the Promised Land is a case in point.

Only two of the dozen, Joshua and Caleb, remained faithful to their leader, to the purpose of their mission, and to G-d's assurance that it was a good land. Even though they were really only sent on a reconnaissance mission to determine how best to approach the coming conquest, ten of the twelve spies soured. Their negative report was designed to intimidate the people and discourage them from entering a ferocious, 'inhabitant-devouring land.' Instead of suggesting the best way forward, they came to the categorical conclusion that 'we cannot ascend.'

And the people responded accordingly. They cried out to Moses, lamenting their very departure from Egypt. 'Why must we now die by the sword?' And G-d decreed that this generation was not worthy of His precious Promised Land. Furthermore, this day of weeping, where they cried for no good reason, would become a day of tears for generations. Indeed, our sages explain, that day was Tisha B'Av, the day that would become a day of mourning for the destruction of our holy temples and quite a few other national calamities throughout history.

Now, the question I'd like to pose here is why did the people not follow the two good spies, Joshua and Caleb, instead of the others? The obvious answer? They were outvoted and outnumbered. 10 vs. 2 – no contest. Majority rules.

Tragically, though, they backed the losers. And the result was an extended vacation in the Wilderness for them and a tragedy for all of us to this day.

So, although we may be staunch democrats and believers in the democratic process, clearly, there will be times when the minority is right.

The saintly Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaKohen Kagan, better known as the Chofetz Chaim, was once challenged by a fellow Jew who was a somewhat educated cynic. "Rabbi," he argued, "doesn't the Torah itself say that we must follow the majority? Well, the overwhelming majority of Jews today are not religious. So, you religious Jews must come over to our way of thinking!"

The Chofetz Chaim replied with a story.

"Recently, I had occasion to be travelling by coach back home from an important trip. On route, the coachman distributed generous measures of vodka to his passengers to keep them warm and content. The coachman, too, helped himself to much more vodka than he should have.

When we came to a crossroads, there was confusion as to which way to turn. Most people argued that the left road was the correct path. I was one of the only sober passengers on board and I knew without a shadow of a doubt that we needed to take the road to the right. So, I ask you, my friend, should I too have followed the majority? They

Celebrating Sydenham Shul's

75th Anniversary

Special Events coming in August



• **Sunday 6 August – Siyum Sefer Torah: The Completion and Dedication Ceremony** of the first New Sefer Torah to our Shul in decades. Kindly Donated by the **Herring Family** in memory of their mother **Rose Herring**.

• **Monday 7 August – "Meshuga Frum!"** – a hilarious **Comedy Evening** featuring, direct from **London, Ashley Blaker** **Emperors Palace**. Stay tuned for details.

• **Wednesday 9 August – Celebratory Dinner** in Honour of **Rabbi Yossy & Rochel Goldman's 30th Anniversary** at Sydenham Shul.

were hopelessly drunk and their judgment impaired. Thank G-d I prevailed.”

All too often, the values and judgment calls of ‘the world’ are simply wrong. No matter how outnumbered moral people may be, we will continue to follow the path of decency and sanity because, sadly, so much of that world is intoxicated with all sorts of new, unholy and unhealthy ideas and their judgment is impaired.

We Jews have never played the numbers game. Always, we have been the smallest of nations. We are not known for our majority but for our morals.

A few years ago, at the time of the fictitious Jenin “massacre,” Kofi Anan (then Secretary General of the UN) questioned, “Can it be that the whole world is wrong and Israel is right?” Guess what. He was spot on. The whole world was wrong and Israel was right. There simply was no massacre. It was just another Big Lie in the Middle East’s tapestry of falsehood.

My wife has taught high school for many years. Once, a former student of hers asked if she could speak to her privately. She needed some guidance. She was now a young woman and everyone was telling her she was crazy for insisting that she be a virgin at her Chupah. She sought my wife’s affirmation that she hadn’t lost her sanity.

All too often it is the world that is stark, raving *meshugga*, veering drunkenly out of control. It takes substantial strength of character to resist the pull of the maniacal majority.

Please G-d; we will be men and women of stature, of spirit. May we be inspired with the courage to stand up and be counted, even if it means being that lone voice in the wilderness. Otherwise, we may never get to our destination.

Parsha Pointers

*Shelach: Artscroll Chumash pg 798;
Living Torah pg 723*

Moses sends twelve spies to the Land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge cluster of grapes, a pomegranate

and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are giants and warriors “more powerful than we”; only Caleb and Josua insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.

The people weep that they’d rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel’s entry into the Land shall be delayed forty years, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of Land, and are routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The laws of the *menachot* (meal, wine and oil offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (*challah*) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by gathering sticks, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (*tzitzit*) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should remember to fulfill the mitzvot (divine commandments).

My Father’s Tzitzit

By Jessica Klein Levenbrown

When I was a little girl, I went to synagogue with my father. One of my earliest memories is being young enough to sit on his lap in the men’s section, where we shared two special games. The first he called “Find the *Aleph*,” the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It may sound easy, but believe me, looking at a sea of black Hebrew letters and finding every *aleph* on the page was quite the challenge for a child of three or four. This game was designed to keep me quiet, but unfortunately it had quite the opposite effect, since every time I’d find one I’d cry out, triumphantly, “*Aleph!*”

And so he devised the second, far quieter game.

My father taught me to braid his *tzitzit*. I don’t think he ever braided my long brown hair, but he taught me how to plait the strings that hung from his soft, white prayer shawl.

You are probably thinking: why is this significant? Of course a man can make a simple braid, and

why shouldn’t he be able to impart this basic skill to his only daughter? You see, it’s that my father was an immigrant. He spoke many languages, some better than others; I didn’t always understand his words or his ways. Still, I understood his hugs, the way he tickled me under my chin, and the hard candies he always had in his pocket. And somehow, I understood his silent instructions. Over, under, over, under—the braid took shape as my little fingers learned the lessons of his big, gentle hands.

As I got older, there is very little else I remember my father actually teaching me. After all, what could he teach a girl who got straight A’s in school and wanted to go to an Ivy League college? Who valued her secular education more than any old-world folk wisdom he could possibly pass on?

And yet, today, what I remember from college seems like a big blur of intellectual trivia compared to the simple lessons of my father: he taught me to say the Shema before I went to sleep, and the Modeh Ani when I woke. He taught me the blessings for bread, for wine, and even for the occasional Scotch. I may not remember to always say these prayers, but I know them all by heart. The way I know my social security number . . . and my Jewish name.

When my father died after a short illness, peacefully in bed, at the age of eighty-two, a man from the Jewish burial society, the Chevra Kadisha, came to prepare his body according to Jewish law. He asked me if my father had a *tallit* he’d want to be buried in, as a shroud. Of course he did, I said, and I went to get his same old and treasured prayer shawl from its familiar worn velvet bag, beside his bed.

The man from the burial society—whose name I don’t remember, but whose kindness I will never forget—asked me a question then that, in my shock and grief, I wasn’t even sure I heard correctly. He asked if I would like to keep one of the *tzitzit*. I stared at him, dumbfounded, and almost laughed with sudden joy and a wave of unexpected relief. “I can really do that?” I asked, amazed that the strict laws of Jewish burial ritual would permit such a sentimental but meaningful gesture. He assured me they would, and asked for a scissors.

I got it, and tensed as he prepared to cut the cord. At that moment one of my dad’s last links to the earthly world was cut, and I felt an almost umbilical severing of the bond between the father who had filled the days of my life and the one who would come to inhabit my memory. And yet, as this physical connection was broken, a new bond was formed.

Today, every time I touch the *tzitzit*, it is as if I am touching my father. The braided cord—for it is, indeed, a braid I made—is a tangible reminder of one of his sweetest lessons. In the braids of his *tzitzit* are the cords of his life, the temporal entwined with the spiritual, in a special, private link that remains long after his soul departed. The *tzitzit* is now a bookmark in my prayer book, and as I turn each page I find the *alephs* and remember my father, whose quiet wisdom I hope to honor every time I touch his final gift.

The Whole Truth

By Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg

The rabbi wound up the services one morning by saying, “Next week I am going to preach on the subject of honesty and truthfulness. And in this connection, as a preparation for my discourse, I would like you all to read the fifty-first chapter of Genesis.”

The following week, the rabbi rose to begin and said, “Now, then, all of you who have done as I requested and read the fifty-first chapter of Genesis, please raise your hands.”

Nearly every hand in the congregation went up.

Then said the rabbi, “You are the people I want to talk to. There is no fifty-first chapter in Genesis...”

A familiar story? How often do we find ourselves in similar situations? At such times, we often convince ourselves that we are not really lying, it is not so bad, it is almost true. We find that the “whole truth” is a valuable commodity and one which it is not always so easy to come by.

In this week’s Torah reading, the spies are sent to the land of Israel, then Canaan, to spy out the land. They came back with falsified re-

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