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ISSUE 94

TISHAH B'AV • SHABBOS PARSHAS DEVARIM 5786

Please treat this newsletter with proper respect.
Please do not read during davening or Krias HaTorah.

There's No Place Like Home

Sophie and I were discussing our families' plans for summer vacation. She told me that her family had been thinking of going to Eretz Yisrael, but then they decided to go to Switzerland. I said to her, "I can't blame you. Eretz Yisrael is so hot in the summer and Switzerland is really pleasant."

Was I allowed to make that comment?

—Jenny



What's the Psak?
Do you know the halachah?

A Yes.
It's true—Eretz Yisrael is really hot in the summer!

B No—
it's loshon hora about Eretz Yisrael.

C Yes—
it's a personal opinion, not an insult to the land.

The First Tishah B'Av

We all know the story of the first Tishah B'Av ever—when the *meraglim* spoke loshon hora about Eretz Yisrael. The fact that they and their entire generation died in the desert for either saying or believing that it is not a good land shows us clearly that we are not permitted to say something negative about the Holy Land.¹

The Gemara tells a story of Rav Ami and Rav Asi who were careful to teach their students in a place where the sun did not shine directly on them—a place where it was pleasant. They did this simply to prevent their students from saying that even a

piece of Eretz Yisrael is too hot or unpleasant—which would be considered belittling Eretz Yisrael.²

Answer: The halachah is B.

Reviewed by **Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy**

Rav Pam, zt"l, advised great caution when presenting halachic scenarios to the public, as each situation is unique. This *shailah* is for discussion only; actual halachic decisions should be made by a rav or halachic expert on a case-by-case basis.

The Shmiras Haloshon Shailah Hotline: 718-951-3696 2-3PM / 9-10:30 PM

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Mimi and Esti, twin sisters, were traveling together to visit the national parks. Both were still single, both loved hiking and nature, both were teachers, and the school year had ended.

Mimi was in it for the fun and for the challenge of exploring new places. Esti had a side mission. Her friend, who was planning the same trip, had told Esti, "Make notes about everything—the flights, the hotels, the places you go. The whole scoop."

When they got to the airport, Esti noticed that their gate was in an older terminal. "Kind of run-down," she noted.

At their hotel, Mimi smiled at the Western-themed decor. Esti commented, "Pretty tacky, right?"

Esti thought the beds could be more comfortable, the showers hotter, the view nicer, the staff more helpful, and

the air conditioning quieter. Mimi, sleepy after a day of travel, settled under her blankets and drifted off.

What you're looking for, quite often, you find. **And that was the grave mistake of the *meraglim*—which we are still paying for!**

Are You a Tourist Or a Spy?

In *Parashas Shelach* (13:1), Hashem tells Moshe, "Send forth men. . . and let them spy out the Land of Canaan." A few *pesukim* later, it says, "These are the names of the men Moshe sent out to spy out the Land." Yet nowhere in the *parashah* does the Torah use the Hebrew word for spies—*meraglim*. Rather, it says they were sent "*lasur ha'erezt*—literally, "to

tour the land."

Mimi was a tourist. She looked for what there was to love and enjoy. The deficiencies that preoccupied Esti didn't even register.

Esti adopted the mindset of a reviewer—a spy. Her goal was to notice everything that wasn't up to par.

By using the word *lasur*, the Torah reveals how Hashem wanted us to approach the Land: to find what there was to love, so we would enter it with enthusiasm—not dread. This is also how He wants us to approach life and

each other. There's so much to love, so much beauty in each of us and in our world. Our happiness and our *avodas Hashem* depend on living as appreciative tourists, not spies.



Last call for boarding! Rav Yerucham Levovitz—the Mirror *mashgiach*—and a group of his *talmidim* climbed onto the train just in time. As the door closed, Rav Yerucham's glove

was somehow pulled off his hand. He stood on one side of the door while his glove fell to the ground on the other side.

There was nothing to do

about it. The train was getting ready to pull out of the station, and there'd be no chance of retrieving the glove.

He Tossed It!

In the few seconds during which the train began its

gentle roll forward, Rav Yerucham's students saw a remarkable sight. Holding his hand close to himself, unnoticeably to the other passengers,

Rav Yerucham slipped off his other glove. Then, just as inconspicuously, he dropped it out the window.

He threw away his other glove! Knowing their rosh yeshivah to be careful and measured in everything he did, the students couldn't understand such seemingly rash behavior.

Can you Crack the case?



Respectfully, one of them asked Rav Yerucham to explain.

"The glove I lost is of no use to anyone. It's just one glove," he explained. "And the glove I still had wasn't of any use to me. So, I dropped my other glove onto the ground outside. Now someone will find two gloves and be able to use them."

Of course it made perfect sense. For Rav Yerucham, whose entire mind and heart were attuned to the needs of others, it was an instant—yet calculated—decision to turn his loss into someone else's gain. Knowing this, it didn't even make sense to doubt that there was a good, well-thought-out reason for his unusual deed. And that is the truth of every good-hearted, well-meaning Jew we meet. When we remember who they are, being *dan l'chaf zechus* is the only thing that makes sense. And the more we do it, the more it will become our first instinct.

Heard from
Rabbi Hershel
Scheinberg of
Detroit on a
CCHF Upwards
presentation

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As a *zechus* for a *refuah sheleimah* for Shlomo Yerachmiel ben Chaya Rivkah

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