

THE KTM

DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה
מציין MITZION
KTM MONTREAL



THE SOUND OF THE GOLDEN CALF

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

The Holon Children's Museum's "Invitation to Silence" exhibit (often referred to as the "Deaf Museum") is designed to cultivate sensitivity toward

people with hearing impairments. It opens with a short clip of beachgoers splashing joyfully in the water, accompanied by calming tropical music. The emotion is serene, playful, and lighthearted. Then the same clip is then shown again - this time with ominous, foreboding music. Instantly, the carefree scene feels tense and threatening. The laughter now seems fragile; you anticipate disaster - a shark attack, perhaps, or a looming tsunami.

Nothing in the visuals has changed. Only the sound. Yet the entire experience is transformed.

Sound is as important to communication as the message itself. If I ask someone for a favor and they respond, "Sure," it can convey enthusiasm or reluctant resignation - depending entirely on tone. As renowned life coach Tony Robbins notes that in communication only 7% of meaning comes from the spoken word, while 38% comes from the tone of voice:

Words that may seem neutral can become provoking if spoken with a sarcastic, demeaning or contemptuous tone of voice, causing the listener to feel hurt and disrespected. A soft tone of voice is often interpreted as lack of confidence – but too loud, and you'll be seen as aggressive.

The absence of vocal tone in written communication has long posed a challenge. Over time, writers developed ways to signal intention. One of the earliest examples appears in the sixteenth century, when the British printer Henry Denham used a reversed question mark to indicate irony. Today, emojis serve a similar function. In an age when so much of our communication is text-based, these symbols help convey emotional nuance. (Minch, Kerr & Moreno, 2025)

This brings us to a curious exchange between Moshe and Yehoshua in our parasha. Hashem informs Moshe that the Jewish people have fashioned and worshipped a golden calf. "Go, descend!" (Shemot 32:7) Moshe is commanded to return to the nation. He meets Yehoshua, who has been waiting partway down the mountain.

We can imagine the tension. Moshe knows of the people's betrayal. Yehoshua does not. All he hears is commotion from the camp. Instead of greeting his teacher - who holds in his hands the Luchot HaBrit (the Tablets) - Yehoshua comments on the noise from the camp (pasuk 17):

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־קוֹל הָעָם בְּרֹעָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה:

When Joshua heard the sound of the people in its shouting, he said to Moses, 'There is a cry of war in the camp.'

Yehoshua assumes the people have been attacked. The uproar sounds to him like battle. Moshe responds (pasuk 18):

וַיֹּאמֶר אִין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאִין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חֲלוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע:

He answered, 'It is not the sound of triumph, nor the sound of defeat; it is the sound of song that I hear.'

They continue descending and upon seeing the calf and the dancing, Moshe shatters the tablets (pasuk 19):

וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֶת־הָעֵגֶל וּמַחֲלֵל וַיִּחַר־אֵף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלֹךְ מִיָּדוֹ אֶת־הַלְּחָתוֹת וַיִּשְׁבֶּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הַהָר:

As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

These verses raise difficult questions. Why is this exchange about sound significant? It appears almost tangential to the Golden Calf narrative, yet it immediately precedes the shattering of the Luchot. And why does the Torah emphasize that Moshe saw not only the calf but "the dancing"? Was the fabrication of the idol itself not sufficient cause for destruction?

Sforno observes that Moshe was more angered by the dancing than by the calf itself. The act was grievous - but the atmosphere surrounding it was worse. The people constructed the calf under the assumption that Moshe had died (32:1). If so, one might have expected mourning, confusion, or reluctant compromise. Instead, there was celebration. Song. Dance. Fervor. As Rashi explains, "קול ענוות" refers to "sounds of blasphemy and degradation - voices that distress the soul of the listener".

The message is powerful: The tone shaped the sin. Like the beach video in the museum, the same event could be framed differently. Yehoshua heard war - victory or defeat. Moshe heard something else: not struggle, not crisis, but frivolity and spiritual abandonment. The problem was not only what they did; it was how they felt about what they did.

KI TISSA
18 ADAR 5786
7 MARCH 2026
CANDLE LIGHTING: 5:30 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 6:34 P.M.

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I write these words at a time of mixed emotions - caught between the launch of Israel-U.S. operations against the Iranian regime and the joy of Purim. Rabbinic conversations this morning debated whether to recite Tachanun (marking the downfall of the Ayatollah) or Avinu Malkeinu (in prayer for soldiers in danger). The joy of Adar is interwoven with news of devastating strikes in Beit Shemesh, concern for our brothers and sisters in Israel, and hope for the fall of a regime that has threatened Israel for decades.

What should celebration look like in Montreal when, in all likelihood, Purim festivities in Israel may be interrupted by sirens and spent in shelters? Is rejoicing premature? Is it insensitive? Events move so quickly that by the time these lines are read in the Daf Parasha on Shabbat, circumstances may have shifted dramatically.

It seems like this will be a week of both rejoicing and weeping. Our parasha teaches that sounds define the intent. And ultimately, intent matters. Joy detached from reality can be destructive. But joy anchored in faith - in the eternity of the Jewish people and in God's salvation - can coexist with tears.

May the hollow noise of our enemies' threats fade away, replaced by the true "sound of triumph" - rooted not in frivolity, but in resilience, responsibility, and redemption.



ENCOUNTERING THE GIANTS: VILNA GAON

BY CHAGAI SHREM

Born in Lithuania, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (1720–1797) was one of the greatest Jewish sages of all

generations, known as “The Vilna Gaon” or the “Gra”. He dedicated all his time to immense diligence in Torah study; it was said that he slept only two hours a day so as not to waste a single moment from his learning. The Gaon was a symbol of absolute perseverance and asceticism, and he revolutionized the methods of study and the emendation of sacred texts. He combined vast erudition in both the revealed and hidden Torah with a broad knowledge of the sciences, viewing Torah study as the ultimate purpose of the world’s existence. The Vilna Gaon was known for his fierce opposition to the Hasidut movement.

Question: Is it positive to study secular subjects like mathematics and science, or is it better to study Torah every spare moment?

Answer: A deep understanding of science serves to achieve a full understanding of the depth of the Torah. The Gra coined the principle: “To the extent that a person lacks knowledge of the sciences, he will lack one hundred-fold in understanding of Torah” (Introduction of Rabbi Baruch Schick of Shklov to the Hebrew translation of *Euclid’s Elements*). It is impossible to understand the laws of the sanctification of the new month without astronomy, or the

dimensions of the Holy Temple and the laws of *Eruvin* without geometry.

Question: What is the preferred way to study Torah: Peshat (the literal meaning) or Pilpul (casuistry)?

Answer: *Peshat* is the preferred way. *Pilpul* often relies on sharp difficulties and forced novelties that sometimes distance one from the simple meaning of the passage. One should not multiply difficulties that have no clear root, but rather labor to understand the language of the Gemara, Rashi, and the *Rishonim* (early authorities) with precision and depth. The Gra dealt extensively with clarifying textual versions, studying the Jerusalem Talmud, the *Tosefta*, and *Midrashim* that had been neglected, and returning to the sources of the *Rishonim* as the foundation for understanding any issue. Truth is not increased through casuistry but is clarified through the pursuit of *Peshat* via linguistic precision in the texts and the comparison of contradictory sources.

“The truth is one” – and any study that is not aimed at clarifying the source as it is may lead one away from understanding God’s will.

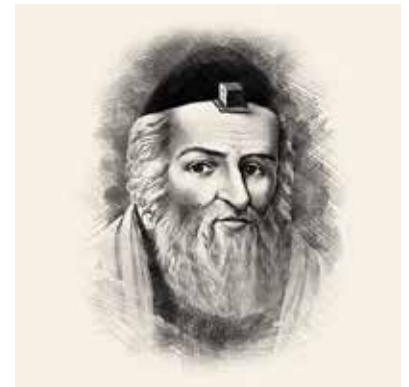
Question: Why did you instruct your students to immigrate to the Land of Israel?

Answer: Settling the Land of Israel and its building is an essential and decisive stage in the process of redemption and the bringing of

the Messiah. Redemption depends on “*Itaruta d’letata*” (awakening from below) – meaning human acts of immigration and settlement. The Gra’s students indeed realized his aspiration and immigrated in waves starting from the year 1808, laying the foundations for the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem and Safed.

Closing words of the Vilna Gaon:

“For every moment that a person muzzles his mouth, he merits for it the hidden light that no angel or creature can estimate”. The essence of human life in this world is the labor of Torah and the refinement of character; a person must distance himself from the vanities of time and unnecessary speech, and dedicate all the powers of his intellect to clarifying the pure truth, for “Habit over everything is a ruler” (The Iggeret HaGra).



אין כמו שנה בארץ

BY JESSE IFRAH, YESHIVAT NETIV ARYEH

Why did I come to yeshiva?

If you’re reading this, you’re probably Jewish.

That means that a lot of people, for a very very long time, made a massive effort to make sure that was so. Just think back on our history - how many times in history would it have been so much easier for our ancestors to simply forget about Judaism and live like anyone else? No more persecution, no more discrimination, and most importantly, no more annoying rules!

But for some reason, for this all time, all these people stuck with it. When I came to this realization last year, something sparked in my mind. As I started observing my life more and more, I started noticing more things that intrigued me about religion. Why do we do the things we do? How do we know what we’re doing is actually real? How much of this do I actually want to do?

At the time, these questions didn’t necessarily keep me up at night, but when my senior year was starting to come to an end, and I faced

a decision on what I wanted to do next year, they resurfaced, and they seemed to bother me more than they did others around me.

I had always known about yeshiva, but always thought that “I’m not that kind of person”, and that it was just going to put me a year behind all my friends. However, as I started to think more deeply about what kind of life I wanted to live, I realized that I didn’t want to simply go on practicing religion mindlessly, and I decided that Judaism was too important to who I was to keep living it mindlessly.

Nonetheless - the questions still remained: is it important enough to be one year behind all my friends? To be away from home? To live in gross dorms, eat gross food, and risk meeting new people? To live a completely new life for a whole year?

This really bothered me - until I realized that these things were not the challenges of going to yeshiva, they were the opportunities! New friends, new country and new experiences. The rush I was in to get through school was completely fake. I was worried to veer off a path that wasn’t even there.

Looking back, I truly believe that going to yeshiva was the best thing I could have possibly done, and was an investment of a year, rather than a loss of one. It has changed me in so many ways I could not have imagined, enlightened me to realities I was not aware of and given me friends and mentors for life.

If I could speak to myself one year ago, I would tell him this: After high school, if you’re responsible and willing, you’ll pretty much never be forced to do something you don’t want to do again. Your life has opened up to be what you make of it. So think to yourself what you want from these 120 years, be active about it, and don’t let menial things stop you from getting what you really want.

Jesse Ifrah is an alumnus of Herzliya High School.



HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMÓN - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

Question: Can I say God's name while saying zemirot on Shabbat?

Answer: Because we sing zemirot out of praise and song and not out of an obligation, it is permissible to say God's name (Or Letzion). Additionally, it is clear that the authors of the zemirot intended for them to be said with God's name. See "Zur Meshelo," for example, that rhymes only if said with God's name. Additionally, including God's name in songs of praises is a more complete and ideal form of praise (see Eruchin 11a). Therefore, saying God's name during zemirot is not only permissible, but also an elevated form of zemirot.

That being said, a person needs to be very careful anytime he is saying God's name. He needs to pay attention to what comes out of his mouth so that his words are truly considered songs and praises of God. If at any point he is not focused on the words, he should not say God's name and he should say "Hashem" instead.

Question: If I put grape juice in the freezer and make it into an ice-pop, do I make a shehakol or a hagafen? Could I make Kiddush on this?

Answer: There are two questions at hand:

Is this ice-pop halachically considered a drink or food?

How does that affect what bracha we make on it?

If it is still considered a drink then it would have the same status as grape juice. However, even if this is defined as a food, there is still halachic basis to make a hagafen and even use it for Kiddush (Shut Shevet Hakehati). One should not do this lechatchila, but if he

already did it or is stuck with no other option, he would be yotzei in Kiddush. There is one more practical consideration to take into account. In order to fulfill your obligation of Kiddush, you need to drink a majority of a revi'it. This may be difficult to do with an ice-pop.

Question: Can I use a robot that will vacuum on Shabbos?

Answer: Because these make a lot of noise, this is an issue of kavod Shabbat and u'vdin d'chol. Therefore it should not be used. In the future, when these will not make any noise, there may be more room to discuss whether this is permissible and still an issue of kavod Shabbat.

Question: Can somebody draw a cross as part of a class project for school?

Answer: Many poskim discuss the status of a cross in our times. Rav Ovadya Yosef has a teshuva in Yechave Da'at where he wrote that Rav Yaakov Meir, the first "Rishon Letzion" or Sephardic Chief Rabbi (1921–1938), wore the cross when given it as an honor when meeting with the High Commissioner of Palestine. Rav Ovadya brings many achronim who do not view the cross as an issue, especially if we can assume it was never used for avodah zarah.

Nevertheless, we should only be meikel (lenient) if there is a real need, such as the case that Rav Ovadya discussed. In this case, the students should draw something else. It is improper for a Jewish school to include a cross in a project. There is no lack of ideas for school projects that are not halachically controversial and that are more fitting for a Jewish school.

Question: If a mourner is leading tefillah (nusach Ashkenaz) and at the start of pesukei dezimra there are not ten people, can he begin with hodu with the hope that another will come soon and he can say Kaddish before beginning baruch she'amar?

Answer: While this could be halachically permissible, it would be better to skip out on this kaddish derabanan. Unfortunately, many people do not say korbanot, which makes this kaddish less necessary anyway. While we do normally say it, if there is no minyan it is preferable to skip it and not switch around the nusach.

Question: Many times, people go up to the Aron Kodesh for peticha with their siddur and place it in the Aron as they take out the Sefer Torah. Is this allowed?

Answer: Ideally, one should not do this, as an Aron Kodesh is considered a *tashmish kedusha* (something that serves an object of holiness), and it is forbidden to place in it anything of a lower holiness if not in the category of *lev beit din matneh alav* (something we would assume is its normal usage). An Aron is not generally made to hold siddurim, and because a siddur is of a lower level of holiness than a Sefer Torah, this is problematic according to many (Mishna Berura OH 154:31). Nevertheless, if there is a need for the public, we can place seforim there if the Aron is built into the wall (Rema OH 154:3). Additionally, we could rely on those who are lenient because the Aron may be considered a *tashmish d'tashmish* (as the Torah itself has a cover - Kaf Hachaim and Yabiyah Omer)

PARNESS HAYOM :: ADAR

2 Adar I Ruth Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Gertrude Fried z"l

4 Adar I The Gewurz Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Judah Leib Gewurz z"l

19 Adar I Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her grandfather, Henry Segal z"l

21 Adar I The Gewurz Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Rachel Gewurz z"l



The Part



When Moshe Rabbeinu didn't come down from Har Sinai when Bnei Yisrael expected him, they panicked. They thought something terrible had happened. Instead of waiting calmly, they rushed to create the Golden Calf. The problem wasn't just the calf - it was the panic. They felt scared and uncertain — and instead of trusting Hashem, they made a bad decision.

Sometimes when things don't go the way we expect, we feel: Nervous, impatient, worried, left out, unsure. And when we panic, we can make choices we regret. Parashat Ki Tissa teaches us: When you feel unsure, pause. When you feel worried, breathe. When things don't go your way, trust Hashem and think before acting.