

## Bnei Yisrael shall encamp, every man at his camp and every man at his banner. (1:52)

The Torah goes into a lengthy discourse concerning the significance and specific order of the *degalim*, flags/banners, under which each tribe encamped. The people are admonished concerning their adherence towards honoring the protocols and parameters of the *degalim*. Each tribe was to remain within the boundary of his area of encampment as signified by his banner. Indeed, we find earlier, in *Parashas Emor* (*Vayikra* 24:10), that the blasphemer's original complaint was based upon the fact that he was not permitted to pitch his tent within the area designated for the Tribe of Dan. Likewise, we find specific protocols within the *Bais Hamikdash*, whereby a *Levi*, whose designated function was to sing, was not permitted to trade jobs and take care of opening and closing the doors. Is it so terrible? After all, are they not both members of *Shevet Levi*, each with the same inherent *kedushah*, sanctity? Is it so bad if one *Levi* helps the other one to perform his function? Is it the end of the world if the *Levi* who sings helps his cousin close the doors?

**Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, explains that, when the Torah demands a specific *sefer*, order, it must be adhered to, because *sefer* is the foundation of discipline. Without organization and order, peace cannot reign. **Horav Aharon Kotler, zl**, would note that order is the basis of *shalom*, peace, because true peace means that everyone is in his place, performing his designated function, thus not encroaching upon his fellow – an action which creates havoc.

Order applies to all of man's actions – not only in one's involvement with others, but even in one's personal life. He must not permit his tasks to impinge upon each other. When one actively overlaps onto another activity – neither one is done well. All of one's belongings must have their proper place. When one's *sefer* is jumbled, his thought process will ultimately follow. One whose thoughts are disorganized does not function well as a *ben Torah*. Sloppy and careless action reflects a lack of constancy of thought and unremitting attention. Ultimately, they all mesh together: calm, organized, orderly, disciplined – a well-oiled, perfectly working, harmonized person. To break a *sefer* is to impede growth and development and succeed in producing a mediocre, chaotic and even disturbed product.

*Rav* Yeruchem reflects on his years in Kelm, studying under the individual who exemplified *sefer*, the *Alter*, *zl*, **Horav Simcha Zissel Broide**. Every chair was required to be in its place. To leave a chair lying around was a grave infraction, because it reflected a deeper and often serious pathology. The *Mashgiach* writes that he inherited a garment that appeared to be brand new from his revered *Rebbe*. It was, in fact, thirty years old. The creases were impeccable, the cloth clean and not worn out.

*Rav* Simcha Zissel never looked sideways because it was unnecessary. Indeed, in Kelm, if a person looked sideways, it was shameful. Every movement was controlled; no movement was wasted. If the *Alter* found a compelling reason for turning his head, he would turn his entire body –

never just his eyes. We are used to adjusting our hat on our heads constantly. The *Alter* put on his hat, and it stayed in place all day.

Rav Simcha Zissel compared *seder* to a chain to which a diamond was attached. Clearly, the chain's value is insignificant in relation to the diamond. If, however, the chain breaks, the diamond is lost. *Seder* guards over every good *middah*, character trait, over every good action. It preserves and enhances it. One begins his daily *seder* at the designated time and concludes it the same way. When *seder* is completed, the appointed hour for *seder*'s end has struck; *seder* is over – even if one is in the midst of a sentence. The *Alter* related that **Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl**, was as demanding about the end of the *seder* as he was concerning its commencement. If *seder* ended between the words *amar* – and *Rava* (referring to the *Amora Rava*'s statement: *Amar Rava* – *Rava* says), one should stop and continue with the next word (*Rava*) when the next *seder* starts. No excuse would suffice for missing a *seder*. Unlike our *sedarim*, the *Alter*'s *seder* was eight hours long – without any stop! He was not a well person; yet, he permitted himself only three hours of sleep at night and one-half hour during the day.

Nature runs on a disciplined order. If anything is out of sync, it can cause turmoil and destruction. The sun's distance from earth may not change; it would either be freezing or we will suffocate from the heat. If the sun were to rise a few minutes early or late, it would be a recipe for disaster.

We now understand why the Torah is so demanding concerning each tribe's placement under his designated banner, and why the *Levi* who is supposed to sing is culpable of the death penalty if he is out of place.