

Light Insight

The Right Club

*“Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice.”
(Numbers 20:11)*

If you’ve ever played golf, you’ll know how important it is to choose the right club. If you’re on the fairway, you probably need a wooden club. If you use an iron club, you’ll be wasting your energy, because the power of your swing will not connect with the ball to its maximum efficiency.

On the other hand if you are in a sand trap, you’ll need a heavily angled iron to chip the ball back onto the grass fairway. If you use a wood, it will be next to useless. It all depends on using the right tool for the job.

A Jew’s ‘club’ is his voice. So much of what we do, we do with our voices: Prayer, Torah study, blessings.

As Isaac said when he felt Jacob’s arms covered with goatskins, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, and the hands are the hands of Esau.” (Genesis 26:22)

The Voice is given to Jacob. And the Hands, to Esau. The internal power which emanates from the heart — that’s the Voice, the external power of action. The Hand is the domain of Esau.

In our times, it is Esau who

sends men to the moon, who builds cities of glass and steel that scrape the sky, who plumbs the depths of the ocean trenches. Esau knows how to use his hands. And while Jacob can also vie with Esau in these fields, when he does, he’s really not playing with his ideal ‘club.’

When Moses hit the rock instead of speaking to it, he was sending out a message which contradicted the fundamental essence of the Jewish People. It was as if he was saying: “The voice isn’t adequate. You need to use Esau’s skills, Esau’s hands.”

The power of the Jewish People is not in its arms. It is in its voice.

The voice lifted up in prayer. The voice of concern and brotherhood. The voice of Torah ringing from the halls of study.

That’s the only ‘club’ we need.

The People’s Tent

“How goodly are your tents O Jacob!” (Numbers 24:5)

What was so ‘goodly’ about the tents of Jacob? Bilaam noted that not one of Israel’s tent entrances was aligned opposite the other. Every tent was angled so that its entrance looked out only onto the side of the tent of its neighbor.

What was so special about that? True, it showed a discretion and a respect for privacy — but why,

specifically, should it be this non-alignment of the tent-openings that caused Bilaam to proclaim the Jewish People deserving of the Divine Presence to dwell among them?

In fact, Bilaam’s whole intention was to find some universal flaw in the Jewish People which would allow him to bring them down — to curse them by accusing them of some endemic sin.

However, he could find no such common flaw. For even though one Jew might stumble in one area, his neighbor would, as it were, step into the breach and excel in that same area, thereby compensating for him.

And so on throughout the entire people. Bilaam could not find one ubiquitous vice that ran throughout the body politic of the Jewish People, try as he might.

That’s the hidden meaning of his words, “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob!” “None of your entrances (to sin) are aligned corresponding to the entrance of your neighbor. None of your sins are aligned opposite the sins of your neighbor. And so — I can’t get a ‘clear shot’ through to the middle! I can’t wound you by lobbing a shot clear into your midst — into your heart. For each one of you steps into the breach — the weakness of one is the strength of the other — leaving no opening to the sin which crouches at the door...”

LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which
express the special relationship between
the People of Israel and the Land of Israel

Nehar Hayarden The Jordan River

Israel's major river, the Jordan, once served as the border between two parts of the Land of Israel. Today it separates the Jewish state from its Arab neighbor, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

There are different accounts

concerning the name of this famous river. One is that it is a contraction of two Hebrew words — Yored Dan — which refer to the Biblical city of Dan which is one of the river's main sources.

The miraculous crossing of the Jordan by the Jewish People on the 10th of Nissan, 40 years after the Exodus from Egypt, is described in great detail in the Book of Joshua. The *Aron Hakodesh* (Holy Ark), carried by the *kohanim*, went ahead of the people and entered the river at

Joshua's command. "As soon as the feet of the *kohanim* bearing the Ark of G-d rested on the bed of the Jordan waters, the Jordan waters split, with the waters flowing down...forming a wall... and all of Israel crossed over on dry land." (*Joshua 3:13-17*)

Following their miraculous crossing, the command came to remove twelve stones from the spot upon which the *kohanim* had stood and to replace them with twelve other stones. Both the stones removed and the ones which replaced them were intended to serve as reminders to future generations of the great miracle of the crossing of the Jordan.

Response Line

Jim Silver wrote:

Assuming Mars is ever colonized and Jews live on Mars, will they need to pray UP to face Jerusalem? This question is based on the fact that the orbit of Mars is outside the Earth's orbit of the Sun.

Dear Jim,

You've certainly asked your question to the right Rabbi: When I was in school, I took up space!

Even on Mars you wouldn't face upwards to pray because one should pray with his head slight-

ly bowed and his eyes downward. Also, facing up towards earth might look like you were praying to a star. A Jewish no-no.

Of course, there may be other valid *halachic* views on this issue; therefore, when you get to Mars, ask your local Orthodox Rabbi.

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