

In פרשת שופטים, the Torah instructs us that listening to our leaders is not only a good idea, but is mandatory. We have to come to our leaders and they should tell us what we have to do. Not only that, but the pasuk says (17:11) **על פי התורה אשר יורוד ועל המשפט אשר יאמרו לה תעשה לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לה ימין ושמאל**. This is a very firm pasuk which says that you cannot deviate one bit from whatever they tell you.

Rashi has something quite interesting to say, which is brought down by all the מפרשים and is rather enigmatic. Rashi asks why the Torah uses the לשון **ימין ושמאל** of לשון? I'll quote Rashi: **אפלו אמר לה על ימין שהוא וכל שכן שאמר לה על ימין ימין ועל שמאל שהוא ימין ושמאל** - you have to listen to the שופט or to the leader; **שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא שמאל**. So that is difficult to understand. What does that mean? The Torah Journal from קול התורה quotes R' Pesach Eliyahu Falk from Gateshead, from his sefer **מהוה אליהו**. He explains that if somebody tells you, go down that block over there and the bakery's on the right side, so your obvious question is, which direction are you coming from? Are you coming from this end of the street or that end of the street? The right-sidedness of the bakery depends on which end of the street you are going to enter, it depends on your point of your view. The same is true with whatever our חכמים tell us to do. We have to adjust our viewpoint in order to see the proper direction. And what is the proper viewpoint? It is the one they teach us from the Torah, to see things from the correct angle.

R' Falk brings down two examples of how to approach things from a Torah viewpoint, to see things על פי התורה. Some years ago, they found certain types of animal bones in the ice cap in the far north, in a place where it is completely ice all year round. The scientists were perplexed. How is it possible that there were animal bones in an area where animals could not live? They came up with many theories. But the מלבי"ם already explains this. After the mabul, הקדוש ברוך הוא changed the מצב of the world. Places that had been near the equator were moved north, and those that were far north were shifted southward, closer to the center of habitation. This was part of הקדוש ברוך הוא's plan to improve both the environment and life for people. So, in a very real sense, south became north and north became south. There is your ימין ושמאל. The scientists could not understand, but the Torah already told us.

Another example is the theory of evolution, which claims that humans evolved from apes, that all species developed over millions of years. We know this is patently false. הקדוש ברוך הוא created the world exactly as it says in **מעשה בראשית**. Where did this mistaken theory come from? From the superficial resemblance between humans and apes. We both have four limbs, certain similarities of appearance, and even behaviors that resemble each other. So they assumed humans came from apes. But the מדרש already explains this. **פרשת נח** says the opposite: after the הקדוש ברוך הוא punished some of them by turning them into apes. So it is not that people came from apes, but apes came from people. Again, the Torah viewpoint is the true one, and the theory of evolution is totally false.

This teaches us that if you look into the Torah, you will find everything. There is a famous story about the חזון איש. Someone once asked his opinion about a very technical neurosurgical procedure. The חזון איש drew diagrams describing how to perform the operation. When the notes were shown to a surgeon, he was astonished and asked, "Which doctor gave you this?" They replied, "It was not a doctor, it was the חזון איש." The doctor then asked, "Where did he study medicine?" And the answer was: "He said he learned it from the Torah." Everything is there if you look deeply enough.

We, of course, are not the חזון איש. We cannot uncover such things. We must be satisfied to learn, to understand the little that we can. But the fact remains: everything is there in the Torah, if only one delves deeply enough.

One last, somewhat unrelated point that I saw and found interesting. For the mitzvah of eating מצה, we know it can be made from the five types of grain that can become חמץ: wheat, rye, spelt, oats, and barley. Today, people who cannot tolerate gluten often use spelt. But the סופר writes that although מצה may



technically be made from barley, לכתחילה it should be made from wheat. Why? Because the ספרים bring down: קמה שעורים קשה לשכחה – barley flour causes forgetfulness. And the mitzvah of matzah is למען תזכור, that you should remember the ניסים ונפלאות of הוא ברוך הקדוש. Therefore, barley is not fitting for matzah, since it works against the very purpose of the mitzvah.

