

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT PEKUDEI · VAYIKRA-ZACHOR · PURIM 5760 · VOL. 7 NO. 23

Rabbi Nissan Wilson

BEHIND THE SCENES

A Secret Look at the Archrivals

What secrets are there in Haman's distant past? What skeletons are to be found in the cupboards of the villain of the Purim story? What lurks behind that evil man, who almost succeeded in his plan to totally annihilate the Jewish people?

Let us take a brief look at Haman's ancestry: King Saul receives instructions to eradicate the entire nation of Amalek. He is not to spare one of them. Such is the message that Saul receives from the Prophet Samuel.

But Saul, in his mercy, takes pity on Agag King of Amalek. Although Agag is ultimately put to death, he succeeds during his captivity in fathering a child, and so the Amalek dynasty continues. Ultimately, Haman descends from this child.

Saul is heavily criticized for sparing Agag. At first glance this harsh criticism seems a little misplaced. Surely it was due to Saul's commendable traits of kindness and mercy that Agag was spared.

A number of years later finds David, Saul's successor, as King. David has a long-standing dispute with Shimi ben Gerah. It seems that David would have been well within his rights to have Shimi put to death; challenging the monarchy is a capital offense. However, David in an apparent display of sympathy spares Shimi. And who is descended from Shimi? The hero of the Purim story — Mordechai!

Here are two stories, which seem remarkably similar. But the results could not be more different. Why did David's noble act of mercy produce Mordechai, whereas Saul's benevolent sympathy resulted in the wicked Haman?

Saul's fault was in not adhering to G-d's command. G-d had sent instructions to Saul via Samuel's prophecy. The message was clear: Do not leave even one. From that one individual would ultimately sprout all those Hamans and Hitlers who have tormented and killed Jews for so many generations. There is a time for mercy and there is a time for might.

David, however, with his mercy, was observing the Torah precept of not taking revenge. It may be true that according to the letter of the law David could have had Shimi put to death, but revenge, although sweet, is certainly not advocated by the Torah.

These two stories contain a powerful message. Only G-d can look into the distant future; only G-d can know of the suffering that can be caused by a seemingly harmless act. Similarly, when we follow G-d's will, we need not worry about the potential side effects.

■■■■■

"As much as we may strive to place our minds in control of our hearts, we must occasionally take time out to remember that there is one Wisdom that supersedes any human mind."

■■■■■

Perhaps with this we can gain an insight into the following statement of the Talmud: A man is obligated to imbibe on Purim until he can no longer distinguish between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai."

The very idea of inebriation is anathema to the Jewish "mind in control" philosophy. Why the day of drink? Why Purim? And why is the inability to say "Cursed is Haman, Blessed is Mordechai" the barometer?

As much as we may strive to place our minds in control of our hearts, we must occasionally take time out to

remember that there is one Wisdom that supersedes any human mind — G-d's Wisdom. Over three thousand years ago G-d revealed his Divine wisdom to us at Sinai. How ever much we may value the human mind, we are fools to think that any good can come from deviating from G-d's will as laid down in the Torah.

The human mind is not capable of looking into the distant future. It is beyond our ken to know which ostensibly noble act will produce a Mordechai who is worthy of so much praise, and which act will ultimately produce an evil Haman.

HAFTARAH

MELACHIM 7:51 - 8:21

Parshat Pekudei

The completion of the Tabernacle in the desert described in Parshat Pekudei is paralleled in the *Haftarah's* description of King Solomon's completion of the First *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple).

SHINING CLOUDS

"When the kohanim left the Holy

Temple, the cloud filled the House of G-d. The kohanim were unable to stand and minister because of the cloud...Then Shlomo said 'G-d has said He would dwell in the thick cloud.'" (8:10-12)

When Shlomo (King Solomon) finished the *Beit Hamikdash*, he saw prophetically its future destruction, that a dark cloud would descend on the *Beit Hamikdash* and the *kohanim* would be forced out. Yet, Shlomo was consoled by G-d's promise never to abandon His people Israel, even amidst the darkest gloom.

This idea lies in the above verse: While celebrating the inauguration of the *Mikdash*, Shlomo envisioned the *kohanim* leaving the Temple in iron chains; the Divine Presence in the Temple was replaced by a somber cloud.

In spite of this, Shlomo was not downcast because "G-d had said He would dwell in the thick cloud." G-d has promised that He will dwell with the Jewish People even in their darkest hour.

• *Ohr Hameir M'Lublin*

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Parshat Zachor

NOT BY CHANCE

The first of the four special *Parshiot*, *Shekalim*, contained the formula for the correction of the negative trait of jealousy. According to the Sages, the *Parsha of Zachor* contains within it the corrective for physical lust.

The whole world had witnessed the revelation of G-d's power in Egypt and at the splitting of the sea,

but there was one nation who was still not convinced — Amalek. Amalek somehow was able to put everything down to "chance." Its attack on Israel was in essence an attack on G-d.

When a person strays after his base desires, the problem begins in the mind. It is this easy-come-easy-go attitude which leads a person to sin. If there is no Divine justice, no reward and no punishment, then why not sin? This is the Amalek attitude. It is this false philosophy that we correct with the reading of *Parshat Zachor*.

לע"נ

הרב ברוך משה בן ר' חיים זצ"ל

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Pekudei

THE NEW ISRAEL

“And he made the breast-plate as a craftsman, like he made the ephod, from gold, turquoise, purple and crimson wool...” (39:8)

At the beginning of Megillat Esther, Achashverosh throws a party to end all parties. The party of the millennium. He was celebrating his unassailable grip on the throne of the Persian Empire.

At this party, Achashverosh brought out the vessels of the Holy Temple which the Babylonians had plundered and caroused with. More than this: Achashverosh’s party attire consisted of the vestments of the High Priest.

Why did he do this? Was it some elaborate spoof? Was Achashverosh poking fun at the Jewish People and their prophecies of the demise of his all-mighty kingdom?

Or was there something more sinister behind this charade?

“And the land was formless and empty and darkness on the face of the deep.”(Bereishet 1:2) These words form part of the opening words of the Torah. They hint to four mighty empires who will subjugate the Jewish People. The first, Babylon, will snatch the crown of Empire from the Jewish People and then the Persian, Greece and Roman empires will successively snatch world domination one from the other. Eventually, the last of those empires, Rome and its cultural heirs, will return the kingship to the Jewish People.

When that happens “*The lost ones will come from the land of Ashur...*” and the final exile will end.

The name Ashur is related to the Hebrew word “*ishur*.” An *ishur* is a certification. Each nation who takes the kingship from the Jewish People seeks to “certify” itself as being the true and final recipient of the crown of the world. But they can only do this by proclaiming themselves the true heirs. They claim to be the “New Israel.” They claim that the testament of faith of the Jewish People is old; that they have a new one.

That, in essence, was what Achashverosh was attempting to do at his millennial party. He was certifying himself as the New Israel. His party was a grotesque replication of the Temple service. The vessels of the Temple were there and being used. He was dressed as the *kohen gadol*, the high priest. He even went so far as to name his ministers after the offerings of the Holy Temple. He was trying to utilize those forces of holiness for his own means, to set his seal on world domination using the higher spiritual forces.

This was no charade.

Vayikra

A LITTLE IS A LOT

“A satisfying aroma to Hashem.” (1:9)

The Rema in his gloss to the Shulchan Aruch says that when a person drinks on Purim, he doesn’t need to enter a binge that will leave him with fuzzy edges for days afterwards. Quite the reverse: “*It is the same whether one does much or whether one does a little, provided the intention of his heart is for our Father who is in Heaven.*”

There is an interesting parallel to this idea in this week’s Parsha: When a person brings an elevation offering,

he may bring either cattle, sheep, birds or fine flour. After each of these categories, the Torah uses the phrase “*a satisfying aroma to Hashem*.” Obviously, cattle are more expensive than sheep, which are more expensive than fowl, which are more expensive than flour. If the Torah wanted to tell us that G-d views all these offerings equally, wouldn’t it have been enough to say that fine flour is “*a satisfying aroma*,” and we would make the logical inference that fowl, sheep and cattle are certainly “*a satisfying aroma*?”

The answer is that, had the Torah left this lesson to a *fortiori* logic, we might have mistakenly assumed that fine flour is “satisfying” and fowl *all the more so*; sheep are yet *more* acceptable, and cattle, most of all.

Thus, the Torah writes after each category “*a satisfying aroma*” to teach that whether our offerings are large or small, G-d looks at them absolutely equally provided our intentions are for the sake of Heaven.

“It is the same whether one does much or whether one does a little, provided the intention of his heart is for our Father who is in Heaven”

• Heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Pekudei

The Book of Shemot concludes with this Parsha. After finishing all the different parts, vessels and garments used in the Mishkan, Moshe gives a complete accounting and enumeration of all the contributions and of the various clothing and vessels which had been fashioned. *Bnei Yisrael* bring everything to Moshe. He inspects the handiwork and notes that everything was made according to Hashem's specifications. Moshe blesses the people. Hashem speaks to Moshe and tells him that the Mishkan should be set up on the first day of the first month, i.e., Nissan. He also tells Moshe the order of assembly for the Mishkan and its vessels. Moshe does everything in the prescribed manner. When the Mishkan is finally complete with every vessel in its place, a cloud descends upon it, indicating that Hashem's glory was resting there. Whenever the cloud moved away from the Mishkan, *Bnei Yisrael* would follow it. At night the cloud was replaced by a pillar of fire.

Vayikra

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests — deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the *Mishkan* (Tent of

Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the *Mishkan's* entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *kohen gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the "questionable guilt" offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

VALLEY OF AYALON (EMEK AYALON)

This is where Yehoshua and the Israelite army defeated a consortium of five Emorite armies in a battle in which two miracles took place.

"Hashem rained down great stones from heaven upon them...more died from these hailstones than did from the swords of the Children of Israel." (*Yehoshua 10:11*)

But then came an ever greater miracle. The sun was setting as Yehoshua pursued his fleeing enemies, so he commanded the sun to halt. Never before or



after did Heaven fulfill such a request by demonstrating that "Hashem wages war for Israel." (*ibid. 12-14*)

The Valley of Ayalon also witnessed the battles of the Maccabees, the Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, and the British in World War One. Nearby Latrun was the scene of heavy fighting in the 1948 War of Independence. After the war, the settlement of Mishmar Ayalon was established in a deserted Arab village on a hill overlooking the valley.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Parshat Pekudei

The words "as Hashem commanded" appear 18 times regarding the *Mishkan's* construction. The Sages instituted 18 blessings in the *Shemone Esrei* prayer to correspond to these 18 commands. Today, when we have no *Beit Hamikdash*, the 18 blessings of the *Shemone Esrei* substitute for the sacrifices offered in the *Mishkan*.

• *Vayikra Rabba 1:18* (thanks to Rabbi Sholem Fishbane)

Parshat Vayikra

"If the anointed *kohen* sins...he shall offer a bull as a sin offering...And take the bull outside the camp...and burn it..." (*Leviticus 4:3,12*)

The Torah commands that the *kohen gadol's* sin offering be burned in public, outside the Sanctuary premises, so that no one will be embarrassed to admit his own sin. "Imagine!" a sinner will think, "Even the *kohen gadol* failed; yet he admitted it and brought an atonement offering. Certainly, I too should admit my failings and bring an atonement."

• *Ba'al Haturim*

THE LIMITS OF IMMUNITY

How far does Divine protection for the righteous from unintentional sin extend? This question arises regarding an incident concerning Rabbi Elazar ben Tzadok. He once saw *terumah* being distributed to a particular Jew. Assuming that he must be a *kohen*, he appeared before a court to testify that this was indeed his status.

Later, recalling this incident, he declared that this was the only time in his life that he ever testified, and it resulted in a slave mistakenly being certified as a *kohen*. Two questions arise in regard to this declaration — how did this sage make such a mistake, and what really happened in the end?

Just as a *kohen* may eat *terumah*, so too may his Canaanite slave. But if such a slave is given *terumah* at the place of distribution to *kohanim*, there is a danger that onlookers may mistake him for being a *kohen* himself and grant him the rights to marriage which the Torah denies to a slave. Rabbi Yehuda's solution to this problem was to distribute *terumah* to a slave only if his master accompanied him, so that it would be clear to all that he was receiving this *terumah* only in his capacity of slave. Rabbi Yossi, on the other hand, made no such restriction, and instead instituted a policy that testimony regarding a man receiving *terumah* would not be considered evidence that he was a *kohen*.

Rabbi Elazar bar Tzadok saw the slave receiving *terumah* without a master present in a city which followed Rabbi Yossi's ruling that slaves are given *terumah* without their masters present. He subsequently testified regarding his status in a city following the ruling of Rabbi Yehuda where slaves did not receive *terumah* when they came alone. His mistake was in assuming that what was proof of a *kohen's* status in one place was the same everywhere else.

But, asks the *gemara*, did the court actually elevate the slave to *kohen* status on the basis of the sage's error? No, says the *gemara*, it only *almost* happened.

According to the text in our *gemara*, and which is supported by Rashi's commentary, the *gemara's* challenge about the likeliness of the sage's error leading to a sinful conclusion is based on the classic Talmudic rule that "if Hashem protects even the animals of the righteous from sin, then He surely protects the righteous themselves." Rashi points out that this is a reference to the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair which refused to eat untithed grain (*Chullin 7b*).

Tosefot, however, expunged this reference from the text because of his position that Divine protection of a *tzadik* is limited to cases like those in *Chullin* and *Gittin (7a)* where the *tzaddik* was in danger of *himself* eating forbidden food because of the major disgrace involved. Such protection is not available in cases like Rabbi Elazar's, and the *gemara* was not suggesting that an unfortunate conclusion was impossible.

• *Yevamot 99b*

VITALITY IN OUR BONES

"May it be Your will...in this month...give us long life...and a life of vitality in our bones..." This prayer, based on the daily prayer of the Sage Rav (*Berachot 16b*), is familiar to us as the one we say on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh. In it, we ask for long life, material prosperity and spiritual success. How does *chilutz atzamot* — vitality in our bones — enter into this list of essentials?

The answer lies in the comment of Rabbi Elazar in our *gemara* that of all the blessings listed by the Prophet Yeshayahu as a reward for kindness to the poor, the most important one is: "He will give vitality to your bones." (*Yeshayahu 58:11*)

Maharsha explains that this is one of the eleven blessings which Hashem bestows upon one who comforts the poor person with kind words of encouragement (*Bava Basra 9b*). It is special because it deals with the care of a person's physical constitution. The Hebrew word "etzem" means both essence and bone, because the bones are the very essence of one's ability to function. All the other blessings contained in those passages (*ibid. 10-13*) deal with matters external to the body, and are therefore not as significant to the ability to function as is the vitality of the bones.

What the Sage Rav had in mind with his daily prayer, and we with our monthly one, is not necessarily the body-building and exercise features of a culture based on physical fitness as an end in itself, but rather a Heavenly blessing of good health and energy which will enable us to better serve our Creator.

• *Yevamot 102b*

PRICELESS WISDOM

What is the connection between the exorbitant fee of an expert surgeon and the *chalitzah* of a *yevamah*? It all begins with the story of Rabbi Papa's wife's sister whose husband died childless. The husband's brother, upon whom it was incumbent to marry her in performance of the mitzvah of *yibum*, was an unsuitable mate for her but was unwilling to free her through *chalitzah*. When the case came before the Sage Abaye, Rabbi Papa suggested that they lure him into doing *chalitzah* by offering him the generous sum of 200 *zuz*. After the *chalitzah* was performed Abaye asked the woman to give the fellow the money she had promised.

Even if she would not give the money, Rashi points out, the *chalitzah* would be valid. Only something which can be done through an agent is subject to conditions imposed by the parties and is nullified upon non-fulfillment of a condition. Since *chalitzah* cannot be performed through an agent,

the failure to fulfill a condition attached to it does not nullify its effectiveness. Since the woman, however, had “hired” the services of her *yavam*, it was Abaye’s opinion that she was legally obligated to pay the sum to which she had agreed.

Rabbi Papa contested this claim by comparing this case to that of an innocent man fleeing from dangerous pursuers whose only hope for freedom is a ferry which will take him across the river. In desperation he offers the uncooperative ferry man a sum of money much larger than his usual fee. After he reaches safety, says the halacha, he has no obligation to pay more than the regular fee and can dismiss his offer as not being a serious one. This is so because the ferry man has a responsibility to save him and can therefore not demand an exorbitant fee. The *yavam* who is unfit for the *yevamah* similarly has a responsibility to free her through *chalitzah*, and since he loses nothing in doing so, the woman is not bound to fulfill her promise of money.

Ramban extends this concept to the case of a sick man who can only acquire the medicine he needs by promising the one possessing it an exorbitant sum of money. Not only is it wrong for the medicine’s owner to demand such a price, but even if the sick man consents to promise him the money, he is not obligated to later fulfill his promise, and all he must pay is the market value of such medicine. When it comes to a physician charging for his services, however, there is a difference of opinion amongst the commentaries. Ritva contends that since the physician, like the medicine owner, is obligated to save the life of the patient, he can charge only for the time spent attending him. Ramban, however, rules that since it is his *wisdom* which the doctor is selling, there is no definable price tag and whatever they agree upon must be paid. (The latter opinion is upheld in *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 335:3*.)

• *Yevamot 106a*

WELCOME THE CONVERT

What is the Torah community’s attitude towards conversions? The answer to this very topical question is a simple one: Conversion to Judaism is not encouraged nor is there acceptance of a candidate for conversion before there is ample evidence of his or her sincerity. It goes without saying that the conversion process itself must be handled by a qualified rabbinical court according to halacha.

A first glance at the statement of Rabbi Yitzchak in our *gemara* would seem to indicate a total policy of hands off from conversion. “Evil after evil,” he declares on the basis of a passage in Mishlei (11:15), “will come upon those who

accept converts.”

This warning against accepting converts, explains Tosefot, is directed towards situations in which the candidate for conversion is *persuaded* to make this move, or in which he is readily accepted without properly determining his sincerity. Where the candidate, however, genuinely strives to join the Jewish nation, we are required to accept him. Tosefot then lists historic examples of famous conversions: Yehoshua accepted the conversion of Rachav, the Jericho woman who hid the Israelite spies; Naomi encouraged the conversion of the Moabite Ruth, from whom King David was descended.

While both Rachav and Ruth positively demonstrated their sincerity, there are examples of conversion in which the Sages relied on their penetrating evaluation of human character. The Sage Hillel accepted the conversion of a person who made his conversion dependent on being taught the entire Torah while he stood on one leg (*Shabbat 31a*). Although such a proposition smacks of insincerity, Hillel’s reading of the man convinced him that he would be a genuine convert — and his judgment was indeed vindicated.

The most powerful argument for accepting converts presented by Tosefot is the *gemara* (*Sanhedrin 99b*) about the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov suffering at the hands of Amalek as a punishment for the forefathers’ rejection of Timna’s bid for conversion. After this heathen princess was turned away by the patriarchs, she became the concubine of Elifaz, son of Esav, because she preferred being a maidservant to the nation of the patriarchs to being a princess in another nation. From her was descended Amalek who made so much trouble for Israel. This was a punishment for rejecting his mother in her bid for conversion.

• *Yevamot 109b*

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YOU IS A JEW

From: Wayne Smith in Rocky Mount, NC
<wcdsmith@cs.com>

Dear Rabbi,

I am a non-Jew who teaches a college course called "An Introduction to Religion." Last week one of my students told me privately that she felt that the word "Jew" as used by me was unacceptable. Although she is not Jewish, she was apparently told this by a Jewish friend. She feels that using the word "Jew" in any context is tantamount to being racist, and that "Jewish" should always be used instead.

My use of the word is always in a neutral, identifying and instructional sense, never derogatory. What is your opinion? Is the word "Jew" ever acceptable? Do Jews prefer to be called Jewish rather than Jew? Would it be politically correct for me to avoid the use of the word Jew?

Dear Wayne Smith,

I personally feel that the word Jew is a compliment. It refers to someone from the Chosen People, the People of Israel. I am proud to be called a Jew.

One of the earliest uses of the word "Jew" is in the Book of Esther in which the hero is referred to as "Moredechai Hayehudi," Mordechai the Jew. (Book of Esther 10:3)

That said, however, it is indeed a fact that in English usage and literature, "Jew" is a "vituperative" insult. This is according the Oxford English Dictionary, considered the foremost authority of the English Language.

Lately, this reference has been omitted from many progressive dictionaries, leaving one to wonder what effect this will have in the face of a thousand years of English usage.

In light of the "tongue-lashing" the word Jew has suffered over the centuries, perhaps your student is right.

MASK ASK

From: <Name@Withheld>

Dear Rabbi,

I wanted to "Ask the Rabbi" what are the sources for wearing masks and dressing up on Purim. Thank you for your assistance.

Dear <Name@Withheld>,

The earliest source I've found mentioning the custom to dress up on Purim is the responsa of Mahari Mintz (late 15th century). He discusses the issue of whether men may wear women's clothing as a costume, and vice versa. Obviously, the custom to wear costumes was well established by that time.

Among other things, masks on Purim symbolize the fact that the whole Purim incident was wrapped in "the hidden nature of G-d's countenance." The Purim events all happened in a seemingly natural manner. G-d's name isn't even mentioned in the Book of Esther! The very word "Esther" means "hidden," and it appears in the Torah in the Hebrew phrase "I will hide My Face." (Deuteronomy 31:18)

ESTHER'S AGE

From: Amber in Kamloops, BC
<agoss@kamloops.net>

Dear Rabbi,

How old might Esther have been when she married Xerxes (Achashverosh)? Thanks!

Dear Amber,

There are three opinions: According to Rav she was forty years old, according to Shmuel eighty years old and according to the Sages she was seventy five years old.

Sources:

Bereishet Rabba 39:13

WILL PURIM MAKE HIM POOR?

From: Y. B.

Dear Rabbi,

I am asking my work for a day off on Purim. If I take the day off with pay (as one of the vacation days to which I'm entitled) I won't hurt my stance with the company to get promoted. But if I take the day off without pay, it could hinder my promotion. I'm paid hourly, meaning that I would be paid for the actual hours of Purim day. Am I allowed to take the day off, and be paid for those hours, or must I take the day off without pay?

Dear Y. B.,

You can take the day and the pay.

The prohibition to work on Purim is in order that a person should not divert himself from the festive atmosphere of the day, but there is no prohibition to profit financially in any other manner. It is worth noting that if a person enjoys his business and that causes him joy, strictly speaking there is no prohibition (but it is preferable to refrain nonetheless). Also, a person is ill-advised to act in a manner that causes him to suffer a financial loss since that also detracts from his festive spirit.

Ohr Inspired:

On a recent visit to *Eretz Yisrael*, I had the privilege to spend Shabbat just outside the Old City, close enough to easily walk to the Kotel to *daven* every day. If I had ever been at the Kotel for Shabbat, it was 22 years ago. I was fortunate enough this time to find myself near the Ohr Somayach minyan, and it was an experience I shall never forget. It was the most beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat I had ever participated in, ever. Thank you to your yeshiva for providing me with this opportunity.

• Adam Heyman <abgy@juno.com>

Re: Doctor Do Little (Ohrnet Ki Tisa):

It was wonderful to read your answer that prayer is the "first resort" and not the last resort. As the French physician Ambroise Pare said, "I treated him, G-d cured him." Rashi's midrashic explanation is prescient: He compares G-d to a physician who tells his patient not to eat foods that will

make him sick. Recent medical research has confirmed the importance of eating the right foods and avoiding the wrong foods as a powerful preventive.

• Jay Lavine, M.D. <Sauromalus@aol.com>

I love it! I would like to share your recent article about doctors with an email distribution list for people involved with cancer patients. Your answer is an excellent explanation of how G-d works thru doctors and other people.

• Joyce Miller <harmony1@sunlink.com>

Ear Site:

Your site, www.ohrnet.org, is wonderful. Thanks a lot for providing a source of inspiration in my life. I've been listening to Rabbi Tatz's audio lectures. They're awesome. Thanks.

• Naomi <nayomi@aol.com>

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

Giving People the Benefit of the Doubt

COOKIE POLICY

Several long hours before her flight a woman waited at the airport one night. She found a book in the airport shop and a bag of cookies, and a place to drop. So engrossed in her book, yet she happened to see the man sitting by her, as bold as could be, take a cookie or two from the bag in between (which she tried to ignore to avoid a big scene). So she munched the cookies and watched the clock, as the bold cookie thief diminished her stock. She thought, more irate as the minutes ticked by, "If I wasn't so nice, I'd blacken his eye." With each cookie she took, he took one too. There was only one left...what should she do? With a smile on his face, and a nervous laugh, he took the last cookie and broke it in half. He offered her half as he ate the other.

She snatched it from him, and muttered, "Oh! Brother! This guy has some nerve! He's totally rude! Why doesn't he show some gratitude!!" She had never before in her life been so galled. She sighed with relief when her flight was called. She gathered her things and walked to the gate, without looking back at the thieving ingrate. She boarded the plane, sank into her seat, and looked for her book, which was almost complete. As she reached in her handbag she spied with surprise Her own bag of cookies in front of her eyes! "If mine are here," she moaned in despair, "the others were his, and he tried to share." Too late to apologize, she realized with grief that she was the rude one, the ingrate, the thief.

How many times have we "known" we were right, only to find we were on the wrong flight....

• Submitted by Carol Beth Yoffee <MYOFFEE@Worldnet.att.net>

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN Shmot
38:22 Betzalel's Genius
40:2 Timetable of the *Yemei Milu'im*
RAMBAN Vayikra
1:9 Reason for *Korbanot*
1:10 Bulls and Goats
1:14 Birds
2:2 Role of the *Kohen*
2:11 The Problem of Leaven
2:14 Why "If"

IBN EZRA Shmot
38:11 Sunshine and Rain
40:35 Covering the *Aron*

SFORNO Shmot
40:18 Essence of the *Mishkan*

BA'AL HATURIM Shmot
39:27 Storage of the Garments

ADERET ELIYAHU Shmot
39:33 The World of the *Mishkan*

SEFER HACHINUCH Vayikra
95 Concept of *Korbanot*
117 Symbolism of Leaven and Honey
119 Salt
123 *Korban Oleh V'yored*
125 A Sinner's Offering
127 The Sin of Carelessness

Last week we asked:

One day, Sam decided to go into real estate. His first, ill-fated, attempt at acquisition was a very small plot of land, only one meter square, in the middle of Jerusalem's Highway One. Sam, never one for bureaucratic details, by-passed all red tape and permit-application and simply set about with his plans to build right in the middle of the busy road. Because of these actions, Sam eventually found himself brought before a *beit din* (Torah Court).

It may come as a surprise to you, but the court found that, in regard to the case at hand, Sam was considered the owner of the plot of land. How can this be?

Answer:

Sam set about with his plans to build by digging a hole.

Someone fell in the hole, broke his leg, and brought Sam before a *beit din* charging Sam for damages.

Sam argued that, although he dug the hole, he did not own it, and the Torah states: "When a person digs a pit...the owner of the pit shall pay." (*Shemot 21:33-4*) Thus, argued Sam, a person is obligated only for a pit which he owns; for example, if he digs a pit on his own property next to public property. But for a pit which he digs on public property, said Sam, he is exempt, for he is not the owner and the damage is indirect.

The court, however, ruled according to the Talmud's explanation of the verse (*Bava Kama 29b*), which is that one who digs a pit on public property is considered its owner when it comes to paying for damages.

• Riddle Submitted by Kol Simcha English Radio 102.8 FM Jerusalem

You've heard of Ohr Somayach's "Yiddle Riddle?"
This Purim, ohrnet.org once again presents you with our...

SHLEMAZLE PUZZLE

Barry Schwartz <kpro3@juno.com> wrote us with the following: (Really he did.)

Q: What is the only type of work (*melacha*) that Walt Disney is allowed to do on Shabbat?

A: A *melacha sheh-aino tz'richah* L'GOOFY, but, only if you're *midok-DUCK!*

Thanks Barry! (Anyone who didn't get it, don't feel bad.)

This Purim, Ohrnet.Org presents the winners of this year's
"Chai-tou" contest, sent to us from somewhere on the Web.
(We'll be happy to credit the author).

*No fins, no flippers,
the gefilte fish swims with
some difficulty.*

*Monarch butterfly,
I know your name used to be
Caterpillarstein*

*Heimlich. Is that a
Jewish name? I wonder as
a diner turns blue.*

*Seven-foot Jews in
the NBA slam-dunking
-my alarm clock rings.*

*In the ice sculpture
reflected bar mitzvah guests
nosh on chopped liver.*

*Is one Nobel Prize
so much to ask from a child
after all I've done?*

*The sparkling blue sea
beckons me to wait one hour
after my sandwich*

PARSHA Q&A ?

Pekudei

1. Why is the word *Mishkan* stated twice in verse 38:21?
2. Why is the *Mishkan* called the “*Mishkan of Testimony*”?
3. Who was appointed to carry the vessels of the *Mishkan* in the *midbar*?
4. Who was the officer in charge of the *levi'im*?
5. What is the meaning of the name *Betzalel*?
6. How many people contributed a half-shekel to the *Mishkan*? Who contributed?
7. Which material used in the *bigdei kehuna* was not used in the coverings of the sacred vessels?
8. How were the gold threads made?
9. What was inscribed on the stones on the shoulders of the *ephod*?
10. What was on the hem of the *me'il*?
11. What did the *kohen gadol* wear between the *mitznefet* and the *tzitzit*?
12. What role did Moshe play in the construction of the *Mishkan*?
13. Which date was the first time that the *Mishkan* was erected and not dismantled?
14. What was the “tent” which Moshe spread over the *Mishkan* (40:19)?
15. What “*testimony*” did Moshe place in the *aron*?
16. What function did the *parochet* serve?
17. Where was the *shulchan* placed in the *Mishkan*?
18. Where was the *menorah* placed in the *Mishkan*?
19. Who offered the communal sacrifices during the eight days of the dedication of the *Mishkan*?
20. On which day did both Moshe and Aharon serve as *kohanim*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Pekudei Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 38:21 - To allude to the *Beit Hamikdash* that would twice be taken as a “*mashkon*” (pledge) for the sins of the Jewish People until the nation repents.
2. 38:21 - It was testimony for the Jewish People that Hashem forgave them for the golden calf and allowed His *Shechina* to dwell among them.
3. 38:21 - The *levi'im*.
4. 38:21 - Itamar ben Aharon.
5. 38:22 - “In the shadow of G-d.”
6. 38:26 - 603,550. Every man age twenty and over (except the *levi'im*).
7. 39:1 - Linen (See *Rashi 31:10*).
8. 39:3 - The gold was beaten into thin plates from which threads were cut. (See *Rashi 28:6*).
9. 39:6, 39:7 - The names of the tribes.
10. 39:24,25 - Woven pomegranates and golden bells.
11. 39:31 - *Tefillin*.
12. 39:33 - He stood it up.
13. 40:17 - *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* of the second year in the desert. For seven days before this, during the consecration of Aharon and his sons, Moshe erected and dismantled the *Mishkan*. (*Rashi 39:29*)
14. 40:19 - The curtain of goat-skin.
15. 40:20 - The *Luchot Habrit*.
16. 40:21 - It served as a partition for the *aron*.
17. 40:22 - On the northern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, outside the *parochet*.
18. 40:24 - On the southern side of the *Ohel Mo'ed* opposite the *shulchan*.
19. 40:29 - Moshe.
20. 40:31 - On the eighth day of the consecration of the *Mishkan*.

WHAT'S BOTHERING RASHI? MEGILLAT ESTHER

“For Mordechai the Jew was viceroy to King Achashverosh; he was a great man among the Jews and found favor with most of his brothers, he sought the good of his people and spoke for the welfare of all his offspring.” (*Esther 10:3*)

Rashi comments: “Of all his offspring:” This refers back to “his people;” the seed of the people.

Rashi interprets *his* of the phrase “his offspring” to refer to the people’s (*its*) offspring and not the more likely interpretation, his own (Mordechai’s) offspring. This is strange because Mordechai is the subject of the entire verse. So when it says “his offspring” one would assume it means Mordechai’s offspring. Why then does Rashi say “the people’s offspring?”

What's Bothering Rashi?

Answer:

The verse has a certain structure of going from less to more: The verse says three things about Mordechai:

- He found favor with *most* (not all) of his brothers
- He sought the good of his people
- He spoke for the welfare of all his offspring

The verse goes from less to more: Most of his brothers, his people, and then all of his offspring (even future generations). Now if this last phrase refers only to Mordechai’s own offspring, then it would be referring to a smaller group. But if it refers to the future generations of *all* Jews, then it follows the structure of the verse, for it refers to an even larger group.

• Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek,
Author of “What’s Bothering Rashi,” Feldheim Publishers

PARSHA Q&A ?

Vayikra

1. Who does the word “eilav” in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week’s Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
4. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-kohen perform?
6. Besides the fire the *kohanim* bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bnei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is *melika*?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a “satisfying aroma”?
11. Why is the term “*nefesh*” used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will *minchah* offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *minchah*. What is meant by “honey”?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning *shelamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe'ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a *chatat*?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burnt while in the wilderness? Where were they burnt during the *Beit Hamikdash* times?
19. What two things does a voluntary *minchah* have that a *minchat chatat* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Vayikra Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bnei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bnei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one’s fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal’s food is provided by its owner, so its innards are “kosher.” Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with “theft.”
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, Hashem regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
12. 2:1 - The *kometz* (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb’s *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat’s is not.
16. 3:8 - The *chatat*.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the *karet* (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS “QUESTION”)

“Remove (the bird’s) intestines and throw them next to the altar...” (1:16)

Birds eat food that they scavenge. Therefore, their intestines are tainted with “theft” and unfit to offer upon the altar. Animals, however, eat food provided by their owners. Therefore, their intestines are fit for the altar (1:16 and Rashi).

The above implies that dependence on humans is desirable. How does this fit with the lesson of Noah’s dove? Noah’s dove returned to the ark with a bitter olive leaf in its

mouth, as if to say: “Bitter food provided by Hashem is better than sweet food provided by humans (Rashi, Bereishet 8:11).”

Answer:

Independent sustenance is good only if it is earned honestly. (The olive leaf in the mouth of Noah’s dove was from an ownerless tree, since all humanity had been destroyed and Noah had not yet claimed ownership.) Charity, however, is preferable to dishonest “independence.”

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.org.il with your questions on any Parsha!

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**WHEN SOMEONE SAYS "BOB'S YOUR UNCLE," HE MEANS
EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. BUT WHAT IF SOMEONE SAYS:**

Jack's the Rabbi?

**From: Brnkarf Flintneir in Stavanger,
Norway <Brnkarf@online.no>**

*Dear Jack the Rabbi,
I often ask myself, "What's gonna be?" So, now I'm
asking you the same question: Rabbi, what's gonna
be?*

Dear Brnkarf Flintneir,

I think you should send your question to "Ask
the Prophet."

**From: Bob Sivilian in White Cloud, MI
<bsivil@dumbelt.com>**

*Dear Jack,
Why were all civil war battles fought at the site of
national parks?*

Dear Bob Civilian,
I give up: Why?

**From: Bill Snorkbork in White Plains, NY
<bill@bill.com>**

*Dear Jack the Rabbi,
I have a suggested riddle for your "Yiddle Riddle":*

*"Alk ja;jan wo ein[kn a oasjknd f opino; aiwe noni a0ioj
fo i093 807 828**(*#09A=)"Al kja;ja nwoein k[na
oasjk ndfo pino;a iwe noni (*#0)?"*

Dear Bill Snorkbork,
Sorry, we've done that one already.

**From: Shalom Mazal in Alabama
<shalomazal@greps.com>**

*Dear Jack,
I'm constantly worried that a terrible tragedy will hap-
pen to me, or that I will die, or both. I never feel sure
I will live out the day. Can you give me some words of
encouragement? Please respond as soon as possible.*

Dear Shalom Mazel,
Don't worry, you can rest assured you will live
a long (cough!) and healthy life, like the vast major-
ity of people. Sudden (cough! cough!) tragedies of
the type you imagine are extremely (cough! cough!
choke!) rare and (ahhhrrgh! gasp!)....

**The above questions were researched
at Ohr Somayach by the late
Rabbi Jack Itchbain, OBM**

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To Our Ohrnet Readers

A HAPPY PURIM!