

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA · 16 SIVAN 5764 · JUNE 5, 2004 · VOL. 11 NO. 33

PARSHA INSIGHTS

SHOUT!

“When you sound the second ‘teruah’...” (10:6)

I’m not a great fan of ball games. It always mystified me why they engender such emotion and devotion. One thing is for sure though, the experience of being in a crowd of 50,000 people who have just witnessed a winning goal/pitch/run/ (please supply appropriate favorite game) is an awe-inspiring experience.

Sound and emotion are very closely linked. When we feel great emotion we are likely to let out a great cry or whoop, depending on the occasion. And the reverse is also true. A great and loud sound stirs us emotionally. It reaches both beyond and beneath the conscious mind.

The question is what do you get excited about? What makes you shout and scream?

This week’s Torah portion speaks of the *teruah*, a loud blast of a trumpet. The *teruah* was used to gather people together for public proclamations, in times of war, or for the festivals. It was used to awaken people to pray at times of national distress. In our times, every day for a month before Rosh Hashana we blow the shofar to awaken ourselves from the slumber of self-complacency and re-dedicate our lives to spirituality.

In the Holy Temple, the *kohanim* would hold lotteries for the different types of service of that day. The lottery would be announced and the *kohanim* would rush to the

location of the forthcoming lottery. This sudden frenzy would cause quite a disturbance. The question arises: Why didn’t they do all the lotteries at the same time and minimize the disturbance? The answer is that they *wanted* the disturbance. The service of G-d demands disturbance! We need to disturb the humdrum of our lives and make a big noise about serving G-d.

When those incorporeal spiritual beings that English translates, erroneously, as “angels” praise the greatness of G-d, they do so with a “mighty tumultuous sound.” It doesn’t say that they praise G-d with sound, or even a tumultuous sound; it says a “mighty tumultuous sound.” When it comes to G-d, there must be a great tumult, for that demonstrates that the only thing that’s worth getting excited about is G-d.

When we feel joy, we should shout to G-d. What’s the point of having a band at a wedding and all that noise? To show that we are going wild over the greatness of G-d!

Shout to G-d when you have good health! And shout to Him when you need a cure! Pour out your heart to G-d! When we say Shema Yisrael, when we proclaim His Oneness, shout it out loud!

The more excited we get about G-d, the more we shout, the more we will come to know Him in our lives and in our hearts.

Source:

• based on Rabbi Avigdor Miller

OHRNET magazine is published by Ohr Somayach Tanenbaum College

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Aharon is taught the method for kindling the menorah. Moshe sanctifies the *levi'im* to work in the Mishkan. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning at the golden calf. The *levi'im* are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, G-d commands Moshe concerning the *korban Pesach*. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, allowing a “second chance” to offer the *korban Pesach* one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the *eruv rav* — the mixed Egyptian multitude who joined the

Jewish People in the Exodus — some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. G-d tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. G-d sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. G-d explains that Moshe’s prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with *tzara’at* as if she had gossiped about her brother. (Because Miriam is so righteous, she is held to an incredibly high standard). Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

ISRAEL Forever

A SECOND CHANCE

When our ancestors were commanded to offer a *korban Pesach* (Paschal sacrifice) a year after leaving Egypt, there were some who could not comply. They had become spiritually impure because of contact with the dead and were therefore ineligible for bringing this offering. They came to their leaders, Moshe and Aharon, with an outcry of “Why should we be left out!”

The result of this was that G-d told Moshe that these people would have a second chance. They would be able to offer a similar sacrifice a month later by which time they would have been purified from their contamination. Not

only them but Jews in the future who missed out on the *Korban Pesach* in the month of Nissan would have a second chance to do so in Iyar.

The concept of a second chance is important in the lives of individuals and of the nation. Our generation has seen so many Jews who missed out on practicing Judaism in the early stage of their lives seize the opportunity of a second chance by returning to their roots. As we read this Shabbat about the second chance of the *Korban Pesach*, we pray that our entire people will utter a heartfelt cry of “Why should we be left out!” and return to the sacred ways of the ancestors of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE NAMES

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

MA'ARAVA – THE WESTERN LAND

The Talmudic Sages were divided between those living in Eretz Yisrael and those in Babylon. When the latter referred to their colleagues in the Holy Land they sometimes used the term *sham*



(there) or *ma'arava*. The latter term means “west” and was a geographical description of Eretz Yisrael being located to the west of Babylon, the Iraq of today.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the menorah burn, and why?
2. From what material and in what manner was the menorah made?
3. Moshe was commanded to cleanse the *levi'im* by sprinkling on them "*mei chatat*." What is "*mei chatat*"?
4. Which three "*t'nufot*" (wavings) are in the Parsha?
5. Why did G-d claim the firstborn of the Jewish People as His possession?
6. Why are the words "Bnei Yisrael" repeated five times in verse 8:19?
7. When a *levi* reaches age 50, which functions may he still perform?
8. Why was the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini not commanded directly to Moshe?
9. What similarity is there between the menorah and the trumpets?
10. What three purposes did trumpet signals serve?
11. How many tribes marched between the Gershon-Merari detachment and that of Kehat? How was the time differential used?
12. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called "the gatherer of all the camps." What did they gather?
13. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?
14. Which aron is referred to in verse 10:33?
15. Which two topics are out of chronological order in the Parsha?
16. Which tastes did the manna not offer, and why not?
17. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?
18. Who did Moshe choose as elders?
19. What was the prophecy of Eldad and Medad?
20. Why did Miriam merit to have the people wait for her?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so people wouldn't say that the menorah was lit for its light.
2. 8:4 - It was made from one solid piece of hammered gold.
3. 8:7 - Water containing ashes of the *para aduma*.
4. 8:11 - The wavings of Kehat, Gershon and Merari.
5. 8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makat bechorot*.
6. 8:19 - To show G-d's love for them.
7. 8:25 - Closing the courtyard gates of the Mishkan and Beit Hamikdash; singing during the avoda; loading the wagons to transport the Mishkan.
8. 9:7 - The people who asked about it were rewarded by being the catalyst for the teaching of this mitzvah.
9. 8:4, 10:2 - They were each made from a single, solid block.
10. 10:2-7 - Announcement of the gathering of Bnei Yisrael, the gathering of the *nesi'im*, and the beginning of a move of the encampment.
11. 10:17-21 - Three: Reuven, Shimon and Gad. In the meantime Gershon and Merari set up the Mishkan.
12. 10:25 - They gathered and returned things lost by the other tribes.
13. 10:32 - The children of Yitro.
14. 10:33 - The aron which held the broken pieces of the first tablets, which was taken to the battlefield.
15. 9:1, 10:35,36 - The Pesach sacrifice, and the traveling of the aron.
16. 11:5 - Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic - these are harmful to nursing women.
17. 11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at Taverah (11:3).
18. 11:16 - People who were supervisors in Egypt and had pity on Bnei Yisrael at risk to themselves.
19. 11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."
20. 12:15 - Because she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the river.

BONUS QUESTION ?

In *Parshat Beha'alotcha* (12:1-13), both Miriam and Aharon are specifically said to be talking together about Moshe separating from Zipporah, yet only Miriam is punished with *tzara'at*. Why is only Miriam punished? Is Aharon also punished in some way that does not appear in the Parsha?

BONUS ANSWER !

Answer: The verse mentions Miriam first, indicating that she was the primary actor. Furthermore, only Miriam actually spoke, as can be seen from the Hebrew grammar of the verse, which literally reads, "She spoke (*vatedabair*), Miriam and Aharon, about Moshe..." Aharon is included because he listened in silence, or showed agreement. (*Ibn Ezra*)

The Midrash (*Sifri cited by Ohr Hachaim*) states that indeed Aharon was also stricken with *tzara'at* but was healed immediately. (*Kli Yakar*)

WHO DESERVES THE GIFTS?

The importance of providing financial support for those involved in the study of Torah serves as the background for a ruling in our *gemara* and an interesting chapter in Jewish history.

Those portions of every animal slaughtered for non-sacrificial purposes which the Torah awarded to *kohanim*, ruled Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeni in the name of Rabbi Yonatan, should not be given to a *kohen* who is ignorant of Torah. The source for this is what took place during the great religious revival in the days of the righteous King Chizkiyahu. Along with a renewal of the Festival pilgrimages to *Yerushalayim* which had been curtailed in the reign of his wicked predecessors and a massive eradication of the idolatrous traces of those days, an intensive effort was made to encourage the Torah study of the *kohanim* and *levi'im*. Towards this end the king "told the people dwelling in *Yerushalayim* to give the portions due to the *kohanim* and *levi'im* in order to strengthen them in G-d's Torah" (*Divrei Hayamim II 31:4*). This was interpreted by our Sages as an indication that not only was this a reference to tithes but also to the gift of meat which should be reserved for the support of those who study Torah.

Tosefot points out, however, that the intention of the above-mentioned ruling was not to completely disqualify an ignorant *kohen* from receiving these portions of meat but rather to dictate a preference for the Torah scholars. Should such a scholar be unavailable as a recipient in the region where the animal has been slaughtered or if he is unwilling to accept these gifts, it is then proper to give them to any *kohen*.

• *Chullin 130b*

THE MEAT OF ROYALTY

Which is the aristocratic way of eating meat? From the statement of Rabbi Chisda in our *gemara*, it appears that broiled meat is the answer. Those portions of the animal not slaughtered as a sacrifice which must be given to a *kohen* must be eaten, he rules, only broiled and with mustard. The reason for this is a term used by the Torah in describing the gifts of meat from the people which G-d has awarded to the *kohanim*. "I have given them to you as an expression of your greatness", G-d told Aharon Hakohen (*Bamidbar 18:8*), which means that he and all *kohanim* after him should eat these gifts in the manner of kings, broiled and with mustard.

This insistence on consuming the meat from non-sacrificial animals in a particular fashion seems to stand in conflict with what the *gemara* elsewhere (*Mesechta Zevachim 90b*) rules regarding the manner in which *kohanim* are to consume the meat of sacrifices which Heaven has awarded them. The very same above-mentioned passage regarding greatness is cited as a source for giving the *kohanim* the privilege of choosing to eat the meat from sacrificial animals in either lightly cooked, completely boiled or broiled fashion because enjoying the freedom of such a choice is the prerogative of kings.

Tosefot resolves the conflict by pointing out that a *kohen* may certainly prepare his meat in the manner which he most enjoys for this is surely an expression of aristocracy. But if he enjoys broiled meat as much as cooked meat, he should definitely opt for the broiled variety since this is the general choice of kings and serves as a more potent expression of the exalted status of the *kohanim*.

• *Chullin 132b*

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

DA N G E R O U S J O U R N E Y

Many are the roads that lead to Jerusalem. But rarely is one as filled with danger as the one traveled by Eliezer.

It all started with a long trek from his native Ethiopia to Johannesburg which included a tension-filled night in a tree surrounded by a pride of lions. The Johannesburg Jewish community, in which he would spend the next couple of years on his journey to Judaism, was a major stop in his journey to Jerusalem and Yeshivat Ohr Somayach. But before he

reached South Africa he was held up by six robbers near the Swaziland border crossing. Rummaging through his meager belongings they came across a box containing his *tefillin* and demanded to know what was inside.

"I got so angry when I saw them approaching my *tefillin*," he recalls, "that I told them that if they touched them they would all die. They were so frightened by my attitude that they let go of the box, gave me some money to continue my journey and quickly ran off."

HEADS UP

From Sidney:

Dear Rabbi,

How is one to understand the wearing of the kippa (skull-cap-yarmulke) in light of the following from the Targum [Aramaic translation]? On Judges 5:2 the Targum explains: "The wise men sit in the synagogues...with the **head uncovered** to teach the people the words of the law", and on Judges 5:9 it reads: "Deborah in prophecy said, I am sent to praise the Scribes of Israel, who when they were in tribulation did not cease from expounding the law; and so it was beautiful for them to sit in the synagogues with the **head uncovered** and teach the people the words of the law, and bless and thank before the L-rd."

Dear Sidney,

As you note, when the Targum says that Devorah praised the Sages for teaching Torah, it uses the phrase "reish g'lai" – "with a revealed head." However, this is only figurative, and not to be taken literally.

First of all, such praise makes no sense. Is there something laudable about teaching Torah while bareheaded? Why would Devorah praise them for that? Second, we find the exact same expression in the Targum regarding a verse in Exodus (14:8): "The Children of Israel went out of Egypt with a high hand." The Targum translates "high hand" as "reish g'lai" — "a revealed head." Obviously, this can't be literal. What does a revealed head have to do with a high hand?

One may posit that the Targum intends to explain that when they raised their hands, they knocked off their yarmulkes. However, a more likely explanation is based on idiomatic expression.

The Targum is translating the Hebrew idiom "high hand" into the Aramaic idiom "revealed head." It means, as Rashi comments, a bold, public show of strength. It's like saying, "The Jews left Egypt with their head held high." So too, in the verses you quoted, "reish g'lai" means "a bold, public display of fortitude". Devorah was praising the Sages who, despite their tribulations, taught Torah unabashedly, with their heads held high.

May we also merit to overcome all our obstacles, so that we may learn Torah with an "uncovered head" – in the Aramaic idiom that is.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

THE STRANGER IN OUR MIDST

Question: A guest of someone in our neighborhood walked into our synagogue one Sabbath eve and took a seat. His host prayed elsewhere so that he had no one to guide him to a place to sit. Although the seat he took had no nameplate attached, I knew that it was the seat of a regular worshipper who would soon be arriving and would probably not wish to embarrass this stranger by telling him to move. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: When one pays his dues to a synagogue he is entitled to the seat which has been allocated to him. While it

may understandably be awkward for him to ask a guest to relocate, it would not be difficult for you to take some action which can satisfy everyone. All you have to do is call to the attention of this stranger that he is occupying a regular's seat and show him to a place which is not regularly occupied or which you know will be empty that evening.

The entire problem could more easily be solved if you or others in your synagogue would demonstrate elementary hospitality by greeting a stranger and showing him to a place.

(It might also be a good idea to ask him if he has a place to eat!)

After the Return

BY RABBI MORDECHAI BECHER AND RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN
PUBLISHED BY FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS - WWW.FELDHEIM.COM

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Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous Ohrnet features

Re: Going Down in Smoke (Ohrnet Bamidbar)

I was very pleased to read this Q&A, as the answer is based on my recent article, Thou Shalt Not Smoke. I wanted to get the word out. (But you should have given credit in your item to me...Remember, it is a mitzva to quote sources.) My family and I use and enjoy your material each week.

• Best, Judy

Ohrnet replies: *Indeed the material for the article regarding smoking was taken from the article by Judy Siegel-Itzkovich and we regret the oversight in not giving credit. (Doubly important for a column titled What's the Right Thing To Do!)*

Re: Wigs and Idols — An Update (Ohrnet Naso)

Ohrnet received an overwhelming amount of email in response to the **Ask!** article on wigs made with hair from India and the question of idol worship involved.

Ohrnet would like to emphasize that one must consult a local halachic expert who is able to ascertain the origin of the wigs available in one's community.

Also, it should be clear that we are not taking sides on the issue, but merely presenting the opinions currently available. This controversy has been explored in the past, and, as then, lenient opinions may be forthcoming.

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