

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA · 5766/2006 · VOL. 13 NO. 34

PARSHAT BEHA'ALOTCHA IS READ ON 14 SIVAN (JUNE 10) IN ISRAEL AND ON 21 SIVAN (JUNE 17) OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### HEAVEN'S NAME

*"...When you kindle the lamps, the seven lights shall cast light toward the face of the Menorah."*

In the name of Heaven it seems that almost as much blood as rain has soaked the earth. Self-righteous fanatics from the Spanish Inquisition to Al Qaeda have invoked the name of Heaven to justify their atrocities. The Nazis believed that their obscene horror-show was the Divine Will, and the Catholic Church was right behind them in their acquiescence and not-so-passive complicity. Moslems murder Christians, Hindus murder Moslems, Catholics murder Protestants and Sunnis murder Shiites — and vice versa — all in the name of Heaven.

In 1646, after the Civil War in England, Mathew Hopkins, the self-proclaimed "Witchfinder General" led a terrifying purge that relied on testimony extorted by means of "ordeal." This featured torture of the most horrific nature including hot pincers and the thumbscrew.

All in the name of Heaven.

*"...When you kindle the lamps, the seven lights*

*shall cast light toward the face of the Menorah."*

Rashi tells us that "The face of the Menorah" means the *ner ma'aravi*, the middle of the seven lights. The wicks of the three flames on either side of the *ner ma'aravi* must incline and "cast light" toward this central light. If so, why does the Torah say, "the seven lights shall cast light"? It should say, "the six lights shall cast light toward the face of the Menorah" — the *ner ma'aravi*.

Six represents the mundane and the workaday. Seven represents Shabbat; Shabbat is not so much the end of the week as the week's end — its goal and purpose. The six lights pointing toward the central flame teach us to orient all our actions towards the center, towards Heaven.

When the Torah says that all seven lights should cast light on the center, it means that even the center must face the center; it's all too easy to justify anything and everything "in the name of Heaven." We must be sure that the things that we do in the name of Heaven should be worthy to bear Heaven's name.

• *Heard from Rabbi Menachem Goldberger in the name of the Mei Shiloach of the Ishbitzer Rebbe*

**We must be sure that the things that we do in the name of Heaven should be worthy to bear Heaven's name.**

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 first-born, 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

### YOU MUST TAKE IT WITH YOU!

The answer to the problem of security for the Jewish People is contained in a passage from *Parshat Beha’alotcha* familiar to everyone who prays in a synagogue on a day when the Torah is read.

As the Sefer Torah is taken from the Holy Ark we echo the words that Moshe said when the Holy Ark moved ahead of the nation as it journeyed through the wilderness: “Arise, O G-d, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.” (*Bamidbar* 10:35)

The “enemies”, explains Rashi, refers to those haters of Jews who do not fight them in the open, while “those who hate You” are the ones who try to persecute them. Although

the passage is directed to G-d, the application is to G-d’s chosen people, for whoever hates Jews is characterized as hating G-d.

The Holy Ark containing the sacred Tablets received at Sinai may be looked at as a portable Mount Sinai. As long as Jews felt that they were taking the Sinai experience with them wherever they went, they were privy to Divine protection against their enemies, the open ones and the closet variety.

In a world filled with both kinds of Jew-haters we must learn the lesson of taking the Torah received at Sinai with us in order to achieve security for Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE SAGES

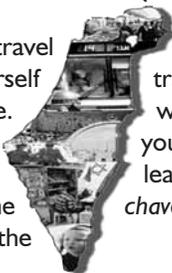
Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

“TRAVEL TO A PLACE OF TORAH LEARNING AND DO NOT SAY THAT THIS TORAH LEARNING WILL COME TO YOU BECAUSE YOUR CHAVERIM (COMPANIONS) WILL SECURE IT FOR YOU, AND DO NOT RELY ON YOUR OWN INTELLIGENCE”

— RABBI NAHORAI (AVOT 4:14)

If there are no Torah scholars in your own place travel to where they are located, and don’t delude yourself in thinking that they will come to where you are.

Do not rely on your *chaverim* securing Torah learning for you by returning to you, and relating to you what they heard from the rabbi. Take yourself to the rabbi, because learning from a *talmid*/student is not the same as learning directly from the rabbi.



Another reading of the Mishna: The reason for traveling to a place of Torah learning is because there you will find *chaverim* who will secure your Torah learning for you. Even if you are very sharp and clever your Torah learning will not be secure without the interaction of *chaverim* — do not rely on your own intelligence.

• Rav Ovadia of Bartenura

## 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 first-born 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, that 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.

- Separating the *kohen gadol* from home before Yom Kippur and the *kohen* who will be in charge of burning the Red Heifer
- Learning the Yom Kippur separation from Sinai or from Sanctuary initiation
- When was the Torah given and when did Moshe ascend to Heaven
- Caution in communicating to another and in repeating what one has heard
- Which functions in the initiation of the Sanctuary were indispensable
- How the *kohanim* put on their holy garments in the initiation
- The belt of the *kohen gadol* and that of the regular *kohen*
- Why the *kohen gadol's* wife did not accompany him to his *Beit Hamikdash* quarters
- The ritual impurity status of one who had relations with a *nidah*
- To what degree ritual impurity resulting from contact with the dead is waived in regard to a communal sacrifice
- The function of the headband of the *kohen gadol* in counteracting ritual impurity
- The application of the purifying ashes and water to the *kohen gadol* preparing for Yom Kippur and the *kohen* preparing for Red Heifer burning
- The man with the Holy Name written on his body
- The name of the quarters in the *Beit Hamikdash* where the *kohen gadol* lived before Yom Kippur and why it was so called

## BELTING THE KOHEN

One of the sacred priestly garments common to both the *kohen gadol* and a regular *kohen* was the *avneit* (belt). But was the *avneit* of both made from the same material?

In regard to the *avneit* of the *kohen gadol* the Torah spells out (*Shmot* 39:29) that it contained both wool and linen, a *kilayim* (*shatnez*) mixture. No mention is made in regard to the material used for the *avneit* of the regular *kohen* and there are two opinions as to what it contained. One opinion is that his *avneit* was made of the same materials as that of the *kohen gadol*, while another opinion is that it was made only of linen.

The source of this divergence of opinion is the manner in which two different chapters in the Torah dealing with the priestly garments are reconciled. When Moshe was commanded regarding dressing the *kohanim* during the initiation (*Shmot* 29:9), he was told to “belt Aharon and his sons with an *avneit*” which indicates that Aharon, the *kohen gadol*, and his sons, the regular *kohanim*, had their

*avneit* belts put on one after the other. But when the Torah reports how the dressing was actually carried out it first mentions the complete outfitting of Aharon including the *avneit* (*Vayikra* 8:7) and then the subsequent complete outfitting of his sons including the *avneit* (*ibid.* 8:13), which indicates that the donning of their *avneit* did not immediately follow that of their father.

These conflicting signals are reconciled in two different ways. One approach is to go with what we find in *Shmot*, that the donning of the *avneit* of Aharon was immediately followed by that of his sons. But what about the passages in *Vayikra* that separate the donning of the father's *avneit* and that of his sons? The answer is that the separation was to communicate that the *avneit* of the *kohen gadol* was not made of the same material as that of the regular *kohen*.

The other approach is to go with the passages in *Vayikra* that indicate that the *avneit* of the regular *kohanim* did not follow that of the *kohen gadol*. The passage in *Shmot* which speaks of them being together is intended to communicate that they were made of the same *kilayim* materials.

• *Yoma* 5a

## WHAT THE SAGES SAY

“It is proper conduct that one should not communicate something to another before first addressing him by his name.”

• *Rabbi Chanina - Yoma* 4b

“If one relates something to another, the receiver of this information is prohibited from repeating it to others without permission to do so.”

• *Rabbi Mossia Rabbah - Yoma* 4b

## FINDING FAVOR

From: Felice in CA

Dear Rabbi,

Recently I feel a friend of mine, who is usually a nice person, has done something really wrong. On the one hand, I am embarrassed to talk to her about it, and also I don't want to put her on the spot. On the other hand, another friend says I have to judge her favorably, even if that means making up some excuse that hardly seems likely, or otherwise talk to her about it to get to the truth. What should I do?

Dear Felice,

First of all, your other friend is right. If the "offender" is usually a good person, and normally does the right thing, you are required to judge her favorably, even if this involves a gymnastic stretch of imagination. We learn this from the Torah verse, "b'tzedek tishpot" (Leviticus 19:15), which literally means judge righteously. But our Sages taught that it also means "judge other people to be righteous". Accordingly, the Torah requires that we give others the benefit of the doubt – an idea echoed in Pirkei Avot 1:6, "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachaya says...judge every person favorably".

A very early and authoritative work on Jewish ethics called Chovot HaLevavot, or "Duties of the Heart", relates a famous teaching: Once a virtuous man was walking with his students when they chanced upon the carcass of a dead animal. The students said, "What a foul odor is coming from this carcass!" But the virtuous man said, "How white are its teeth!" (Sha'ar Hakeniya, ch. 6). While both statements are true, the virtuous man went out of his way to find a positive viewpoint despite the more readily perceptible foul odor of the carcass. If this is the case concerning a dead animal, how much more so should we try to find the good in a human being?

Interestingly, I recently heard two true stories (from the

people involved) directly related to your question:

A young man went to a local kiosk to buy something. He gave the saleswoman a twenty-shekel bill. While she was getting his change, the phone rang. He waited for her to finish the short call to receive his ten-shekel change. When she finished, he asked for the change, but she replied that she had given it to him. He insisted that he didn't get it. She told him to check his pockets, which he had already done. He countered that she had been talking on the phone and obviously wasn't paying attention to what she was doing. She claimed she knew she took the change from the register. Each was certain that he/she was right and that the other was wrong. The young man decided it wasn't worth arguing over, so he left. After a few moments, she ran after him calling him back. It turns out, she explained, that she found the coin in her sleeve, and it must have slipped in there during the phone call.

One neighbor noticed rubble that obstructed an air vent to the basement. He recalled that another neighbor on that side of the building had done some construction a while back and decided the debris must have been left from the construction. He approached the neighbor politely saying that the workers must have left the rubble there and asked him to remove it. He was astonished when not only did the neighbor not capitalize on the opportunity he provided him to bow out gracefully, the neighbor "audaciously" asserted that the debris was not his. The one claimed, "Where else did it come from?" The other retorted, "I don't know, but it wasn't from me". While they were arguing, a third neighbor called from a window at their feet, "Stop bickering, I just had this new window installed — I'll remove the debris tomorrow when the job's done."

These true stories demonstrate that often we're sure we are right and others are wrong. After all, "all the facts" point to that conclusion. In reality, the truth is "up the sleeve" or "at your feet", but we don't look into the matter thoroughly or objectively enough. Ultimately, the best thing to do would be to approach the person in a non-accusing manner with a sincere intention to judge the person to be righteous.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### THE MIRACLE IN SDEROT

People in the city of Sderot in the south of Israel have become accustomed to the sound of rockets falling in their community. But what happened the other week when a terrorist rocket hit a local religious high school became not only the talk of the town but of the whole nation.

The rocket fired by the Islamic Jihad terrorists crashed into a classroom of the Netiv Yeshivati School at 8:35 in

the morning. The students are usually in the room at that time after completing the prayer service in a nearby room at 8:30. That morning there was some delay and they did not leave for their classroom on schedule. It was this delay in completing their prayers that saved their lives.

The headlines that appeared the next morning could only describe what happened as "The Miracle in Sderot".

## ABOVE SUSPICION

**Question:** I sometimes find myself in a situation in which I know that I am acting in a perfectly proper fashion, but one that arouses the suspicion of others who are unfamiliar with the circumstances and judge one by appearances. If G-d knows that I am right must I be concerned with what suspicious people may think?

**Answer:** The need to avoid suspicion even when you are acting with perfect honesty is stressed in passages in the Torah, Prophets and Writings. The most explicit source is the counsel of Moshe to the Tribes of Reuven and Gad when dealing with their request for allocating their por-

tions of Eretz Yisrael on the western side of the Jordan River: "You shall be free of guilt before G-d and before Yisrael." (*Bamidbar* 32:22)

Although it is incumbent on the observers of your behavior to favorably judge your suspicious action, you have no right to assume that they will do so. By assuming that you have done something wrong they not only lose their respect for you but also are sometimes even encouraged to behave improperly since "everyone does it".

It is therefore crucial to always behave in a manner that is above suspicion.

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