



SHABBAT PARSHAT TZAV-SHMINI · 15-22 ADAR II 5768 · MAR. 22-29 2008 · VOL. 15 NO. 26

~ SPECIAL PURIM EDITION ~

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Tzav

LIONS OF THE SOUL

“...he (the kohen) will separate the ash” (6:1)

July 1956. Saturday afternoon. A taxi leisurely turns off Dizengoff Street into a side turning. “Close Up” on the taxi driver’s face. He is wearing a blue baseball cap

Driver: They went to their deaths like sheep. They asked their Rabbis, “Rabbis, should we run away to Israel or should we stay here in Europe?” And you know what all those great rabbis said (puts on fake Yiddish accent)? “Don’t leave! Don’t go to Israel! In Israel your souls will be in mortal peril. Jews there drive down Dizengoff on a Shabbat afternoon! You’re better off here in Lodz.”

The driver chuckles, pleased with his own joke. He thinks for a second.

“So I ran away in 1937. I came here. I got a job as a taxi driver. I used to be religious but I gave it up here. Those poor fools are now ashes and I’m alive and driving down Dizengoff on Shabbat.”

The picture freezes on the laugh of the driver.

Dissolve. We hear Shostakovitch’s String Quartet No. 8. A large hearse is seen leaving a graveyard. Cut to a freshly filled-in grave in the mid-distance. Hanging on the grave marker is a blue baseball cap. The camera tracks backward. All around it are gravestones. The camera keeps tracking back through what seems to be like hundreds and hundreds of identical gravestones. They are all identical. Suddenly, the camera stops and slowly tracks in, lingering on one of thousands of identical stones. At the top of the gravestone there is a carving — six pieces of barbed wire arranged in a Star of David. The camera moves downward. We read the inscription: “For one of the Six Million — a place in the earth for someone whose ashes are blown on the four winds.”

No one gets out of here alive. We all make our exit one way or another. The question is what we do in this brief walk between two darknesses. We can live like heroes and die

like martyrs, with the name of G-d on our lips. We can die for the sake of our beliefs, for the sake of religion and our People. We can die like Jews and because we are Jews.

Or we can shorten our names, shorten our noses and vanish into the background. Either way, we all end up sitting in that same waiting room before our cases come up in the “Supreme Court”. There, we will reflect on what we did and what we didn’t do. What we could have done and what we did.

The world sees our martyrs as passive — lambs to the slaughter. We see them as gigantic heroes of the soul. Heroes who never allowed their fiendish enemies the pleasure of seeing them falter in their trust in G-d’s ultimate justice; heroes who, with the worst imaginable horrors staring them in the face, never slackened in the observance of their faith. They were quick to do the Will of their Father in Heaven. And in death they are not separated from Him. As they were about to leave this world, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (Hy”d) cautioned his flock that no impure thought should enter their minds so that they might be a “pure offering”, an atonement for their brothers and sisters who would live on — in Israel, in America or wherever.

“Who is like Your people Israel — one nation in all the world?”

If we live on today, it is because of them. Our lives are founded on the ashes of the millions. They gave their most precious gift to us. Even though they never met us. They were not sheep. They were lions of the soul.

“...he (the Kohen) will separate the ash.”

The first service of the day in the Holy Temple — that on which the service of rest of the day was built — was the *terumat hadeshen*. The *kohen* took ashes from the innermost part of the Altar and placed them on the floor of the court-

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Tzav

The Torah addresses Aharon and his sons to teach them additional laws relating to their service. The ashes of the *korban olah* — the offering burnt on the altar throughout the night — are to be removed from the area by the *kohen* after he changes his special linen clothing. The *olah* is brought by someone who forgot to perform a positive commandment of the Torah. The *kohen* retains the skin. The fire on the altar must be kept constantly ablaze. The *korban mincha* is a meal offering of flour, oil and spices. A handful is burned on the altar and a *kohen* eats the remainder before it becomes leaven. The Parsha describes the special *korbanot* to be offered by the *Kohen Gadol* each day, and by Aharon's sons and future descendants on the day of their inauguration. The *chatat*, the *korban* brought after an accidental transgression, is described, as are the laws of slaughtering and sprinkling the blood of the *asham* guilt-*korban*. The details of *shelamim*, various peace *korbanot*, are described, including the prohibition against leaving uneaten until morning the remains of the *todah*, the thanks-*korban*. All sacrifices must be burned after they may no longer be eaten. No sacrifice may be eaten if it was slaughtered with the intention of eating it too late. Once they have become ritually impure, *korbanot* may not be eaten and should be burned. One may not eat a *korban* when he is ritually impure. Blood and *chelev*, forbidden animal fats, are prohibited to be eaten. Aharon and his sons are granted the breast and shank of every

korban shelamim. The inauguration ceremony for Aharon, his sons, the Mishkan and all of its vessels is detailed.

Shmini

On the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various *korbanot* (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. G-d allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the Mishkan. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by G-d. A fire comes from before G-d and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the *kohanim* as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the Mishkan. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. *Bnei Yisrael* are commanded to be separate and holy — like G-d.

ISRAEL Forever

PURIM AND THE POOR

One of the *mitzvot* Jews everywhere will be fulfilling this week of Purim is *matanot l'evyonim* – gifts to the poor.

Even though Jews are involved throughout the year in *tzedaka* there is a special obligation on Purim to provide for the poor. We may suggest that the message of this mitzvah is that on a day when we are celebrating an historical miracle in such lavish fashion we must think of those who lack the

financial means to do the same.

The gap in Israel between the prosperous and the poor is an alarming one. It is most poignant in regard to large families who struggle to survive and desperately need governmental aid in the form of children's allowances.

It is to be hoped that the message of Purim for the poor will be understood and applied by Israel's leaders so that we will see relief for the underprivileged in Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

A MIRACLE WITHOUT HALLEL

As Jews throughout the world celebrate the miracle of Purim the question arises as to why Hallel is not said on this happy day.

One of the answers given to this question in the Talmud (*Megillah* 14a) is that Hallel is not said for a miracle that took place outside of Eretz Yisrael. Even



though we do say Hallel in regard to the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt, that event took place before Jews entered their Promised Land. Once they came to Eretz Yisrael no place outside of it was worthy of having Hallel said for a miracle that took place there.

PARSHA Q&A ?

Tzav

1. What separated the *kohen's* skin from the priestly garments?
2. How often were the ashes removed from upon the *mizbe'ach*? How often were they removed from next to the *mizbe'ach*?
3. If someone extinguishes the fire on the *mizbe'ach*, how many Torah violations has he transgressed?
4. The portion of a flour-offering offered on the *mizbe'ach* may not be *chametz*. But is the *kohen's* portion allowed to be *chametz*?
5. When a *kohen* is inaugurated, what offering must he bring?
6. What three baking processes were used to prepare the *korban* of Aharon and his sons?
7. What is the difference between a *minchat kohen* and a *minchat Yisrael*?
8. When is a *kohen* disqualified from eating from a *chatat*?
9. What is the difference between a copper and earthenware vessel regarding removing absorbed tastes?

10. Can an animal dedicated as an *asham* be replaced with another animal?

Shmini

1. What date was “*yom hashemini*”?
2. Which of Aharon's *korbanot* atoned for the Golden Calf?
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo'ed* with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three *chatat* goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

Tzav

1. 6:3 - Nothing.
2. 6:4 -A) Every day. B) Whenever there was a lot.
3. 6:6 - Two.
4. 6:10 - No.
5. 6:13 - A *korban mincha* — A tenth part of an *ephah* of flour.
6. 6:14 - Boiling, baking in an oven and frying in a pan.
7. 6:15 - The *minchat kohen* is burnt completely. Only a handful of the *minchat Yisrael* is burnt, and the remainder is eaten by the *kohanim*.
8. 6:19 - If he is *tamei* (spiritually impure) at the time of the sprinkling of the blood.
9. 6:21 - One can remove an absorbed taste from a copper vessel by scouring and rinsing, whereas such a taste can never be removed from an earthenware vessel.
10. 7:1 - No.

Shmini

1. 9:1 - First of *Nissan*.

2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. 9:11 - It's the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe'ach* that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe'ach*.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a *halachic* ruling. Also, a *kohen* is forbidden to enter the *Ohel Mo'ed*, approach the *mizbe'ach*, or perform the *avoda*.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of *Rosh Chodesh*, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.

- Indirect forms of making a vow to be a nazir
- The pattern of *mishnayot*
- When it is necessary for a nazir to be passing by or the vow maker clutching his hair
- Which nazir is considered a sinner
- If one vows to offer birds as a sacrifice does this mean he is making a vow to be a nazir
- “Right” and “left|” as forms of oath
- A vow to assume only one part of the nazir’s total responsibilities
- The *nezirut* of Shimshon and Avshalom
- How long is a *nezirut* for which no time period was specified in the vow
- A vow for two periods of *nezirut*
- When part of a day is considered like a full one
- A vow for a very short or very long period of *nezirut*
- When a day or an hour more than 30 days obligates the nazir to another 30 days
- A vow which obligates one to a lifelong *nezirut*

SHIMSHON AND THE PHILISTINES

An ordinary nazir is prohibited to have any contact with the dead. The exception is a Shimshonite Nazir. This is derived from the fact that Shimshon himself had contact with the Philistines whom he slew. Anyone making a vow to be a nazir like Shimshon therefore has the same exception.

But how do we know that Shimshon actually came into contact with the corpses of those Philistines?

Two passages that describe Shimshon’s slaying of Philistines prove inconclusive in establishing that he actually came into contact with the corpses, and we must rely on an

oral tradition that this was the case.

In regard to one of those passages presented as possible sources there is an interesting problem raised by one of the commentaries.

“And Shimshon said: “With the jawbone of an ass I have slain a thousand men.” (*Shoftim* 15:16)

How could this prove that Shimshon was permitted to have contact with the dead? asks Rabbeinu Osher (ROSH). Those Philistines had come to capture and punish him for inflicting damage to their property. He was therefore acting in self-defense, which would be permitted even for an ordinary nazir who is prohibited to have contact with the dead.

• *Nazir* 4b

What the SAGES Say

“This is my G-d and I shall glorify Him” (*Shmot* 15:2) can be interpreted as “I shall beautify myself before Him in the performance of *mitzvot* – a beautiful succah, lulav, tzitzit and Sefer Torah.”

• *Beraita - Nazir* 2b

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- A vow to offer something to the Sanctuary which is incorrectly expressed
- A vow based on whether a cow will get up or a door will open
- A vow made, sober or drunk, on a glass of wine poured for him
- Vows made for partial *nezirut* or out of ignorance of what *nezirut* entails
- When one nazir cuts the hair of the other
- The mystery of which woman the agent betroth for his sender
- Aspects of *shlichut* (agency)
- A vow to offer half of the sacrifices required of a nazir
- A vow based on condition he will have a son
- Successive periods of *nezirut*
- A vow in connection with the birthday of Moshe
- Some of the laws of mourning and spiritual contamination as a result of an emission

“IT’S A BOY”

One who makes a vow to be a nazir when a son will be born to him is not obligated to fulfill this vow if a daughter is born instead.

This ruling in the *mishna* seems rather obvious and the question is raised in our *gemara* as to why it was necessary to mention it.

The answer lies in the Hebrew word for son – “*ben*”. This word appears in the Torah in a similar form with a different meaning. When the childless Matriarch Rachel suggested to

her husband Yaakov to go to her handmaid her objective was that through Bilha bearing a child it would be considered as Rachel herself “being built through her”.

When Rachel spoke of “being built” her hopes would have been fulfilled with Bilha bearing even a daughter. We might therefore assume that when one makes a vow to be a nazir if he is blessed with a “*ben*” that his intention is “being built” and that a daughter satisfies this condition. It is therefore necessary for the *mishna* to inform us that when one says “*ben*” he means a son only.

• *Nazir 13a*

What the SAGES Say

“It may be assumed with certainty that an agent carried out his mission.”

• *Rabbi Yochanan.- Nazir 12a*

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

MAXI AND MINI

One of the great Chassidic leaders of the past generation was Rav Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam, the Admor of Klausenberg. The Kiryat Sanz community in Netanya, with all of its families, educational institutions and Laniado Hospital, is a living monument to his leadership.

In the course of securing Israel government help for this project, the rabbi once met with Prime Minister Ben Gurion,

who asked him what his expectations of the Jewish state were.

“I have both maximal and minimal expectations,” replied the Klausenberger. “Maximally I would like to see you wearing the Chassidic garb of a *shtreimel* and a *bekishe*. Minimally I would hope that you will allow me to wear them.”

GIVING TO THOSE WHO HAVE

From: Hilary in Austin, TX

Dear Rabbi,

On Purim there are two mitzvot of giving: 1) to the poor and 2) to friends and acquaintances. I understand the first: to enable the needy to participate in and enjoy the holiday. I don't understand the second. Why give to people who already have? For one, it seems like an unnecessary expense; and if the money is being spent, wouldn't it be better to give that extra money to the poor as well?

Dear Hilary,

Interestingly, the mitzvah to give to the poor can be fulfilled with money, objects or food. The mitzvah of gifts to friends can only be fulfilled with food ready to be enjoyed on Purim. Even the poor are required to give such food gifts to others. This reveals the idea that the gifts to friends is less about charity or monetary help than it is about sharing and joy – things which everyone is in need of. Another difference is that the charity-gift is to be given as one gift each to at least two needy people while the friend-gift must include two foods to at least one person.

Despite the differences and different purposes between both types of gifts, one should be careful to spend at least as much money on the gifts to the poor as on the gifts to the friend (or friends). And here your comment is very appropriate, as many unfortunately spend much more on friends who have than on the unfortunate. Also, given the joy-sharing nature of the friend-gift, one should give precedence to giving to those with whom his friendship is lacking, thereby transforming the friend-gift to a friend-making gift.

But what is the source of the friend-making gift?

The diabolic Haman was a member of the wicked nation Amalek, descendent of Esau, who, unprovoked, attacked the Jews in the desert after having left Egypt. The power of Amalek draws from Jews alienating themselves from G-d and from one another. This is evident from the verse, "Recall how Amalek happened upon you on the way and cut off all the stragglers at your rear, when you were faint and weary" (Duet. 25:18). Our Sages note that this event occurred right after many Jews complained against G-d, thereby weakening their dedication to Him and causing them to divisively tail behind the rest of the nation (Rashi).

Following the example of his ancestors, Haman also intended to capitalize on this dual divisiveness among the Jews' to catalyze their downfall and destruction. Despite the Jews having been warned not to partake of the king's

debauched festivities of indulgence, many attended nonetheless. This represented their repudiation of G-d and resulted in a separation between them and their Jewish brethren. It is at this point that Haman presents his plan of genocide to the king by prefacing with the two-fold accusation, "There is a certain people in your kingdom who are scattered and separate" (Esther 3:8). Our sources explain that Haman intended to incite Divine wrath against the Jews who had both departed from G-d and had estranged themselves from one another.

It was to counter this destructive snare of spiritual and national divisiveness that Esther commanded Mordechai, "Go gather together all the Jews" (4:16). If Jewish unity would be restored Haman and the force of Amalek and Esau would be powerless to capitalize on the wedge between the Jews and G-d. And that's what happened. The Jews united in penitential fasting and prayer, bridging the spiritual and national schisms that carved the abyss threatening their demise. In this, the righteous Esther followed the example of her ancestor Jacob, who, upon gathering himself into his deathbed, gathered his sons to implore them to remain loyal to G-d and each other (Gen. 49). Thus our Sages taught, "Jacob's ingathering and the ingathering of his sons saved him from the hand of Esau".

It is to celebrate the miraculous repentance, reunification and resulting redemption of the Jews that Mordechai and Esther commemorated the 14th and 15th of Adar "As the days when the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month that was reversed for them from grief to joy and from mourning to a festive day to make them days of feasting and joy, and sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (9:22).

Given this perspective, we see that given the right intention, far from being an unnecessary expense, sending friend-making gifts on Purim fulfills a vital need for every Jew regardless of his material standing. Today, more than ever, we are sorely in need for mutual love and respect among our fellow Jews. Despite many Jew's favorable fiscal status and strong financial base, our infighting, bickering, jealousies, grudges and slandering spiritually and nationally impoverishes us to the point of fraternal bankruptcy, thereby exposing us to the most diabolical diatribes and designs of our foes.

May the mitzvah giving of Purim truly inspire and encourage us to gather ourselves back to G-d and to one another such that we rightly retain the title "Children of Israel" and thereby conquer the forces plotting our destruction. Amen.

continued from page one

yard to the east of the ramp that led to the Altar's top. These ashes had to come from the incinerated flesh of the previous day's offerings.

Every day the *kohen* would remove the ash and place it at the base of the Altar. Miraculously, the ash would be swallowed by the ground around the base of the Altar. In other words, the ashes became part of the Altar on which that service was performed.

Today's service of G-d is always built on yesterday's service. A Jew serves G-d today with his life as willingly as ultimately he is prepared to serve Him with his ashes.

Sources: Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch and a story heard from Rabbi Zev Leff

Shmini

PLEASE READ BEFORE USING!

"...And they brought before G-d a strange fire that He had not commanded them..." (10:1)

The Torah is the instruction manual of the world written by the Maker of world. No one knows better how to operate a machine than its maker. Imagine someone buying a new car. The salesman says to the proud new owner "Oh yes sir. One more thing — your instruction manual..." The driver says, "Oh I don't need that, I instinctively *feel* what the tire pressures should be, and I *have a sixth sense* when the car needs a major service. I *know intuitively* what octane fuel the car needs..."

Few people when faced with operating something as precise and unforgiving as a car would leave these sorts of decisions to instinct and feeling. Life is no less demanding or complex than a car — rather more so!

And yet many people are happy to coast along blithely assuming that they are not putting water in their spiritual gas tank.

The purpose of life is to become close to the Creator of the world, and only the Creator of the world knows how the world can be utilized to become close to Him.

We live in an era where people are more interested in *feeling* spiritual than being spiritual. We are a TV generation

taught to expect endless effortless instant gratification, where this-week's-guru, or mail-order instant-*kabbala* try to replace the hard work of real spiritual growth.

That is what the Torah is warning us against in the story of Nadav and Avihu. The "strange fire" may *feel* spiritual, but it cannot connect with the source. And the reason it cannot connect is the seemingly redundant phrase "*which He had not commanded them*". If it was a strange fire, then by definition it was not commanded by G-d. Rather, the *reason* it was strange is *because* it was not commanded.

Our connection with G-d is through doing His will, because the will of person and himself are indivisible. The self expresses itself as the will. Only when we do G-d's will do we bring ourselves close to Him. The *mitzvot* are the will of G-d expressed in concrete form.

Any other form of worship is merely *feeling* spiritual. It's not *being* spiritual. And for people on the level of Nadav and Avihu that was a failing of a very fundamental kind.

KOSHER STYLE

"Every (animal) that has a split hoof, which is completely separated into double hooves, and that brings up its cud — that one you may eat." (11:3)

These two aspects of a kosher land animal are not a means of identifying them as being kosher. Rather, they are the *cause* of them being kosher.

In other words, having split hooves and regurgitating its cud are what *makes* the animal kosher.

The Torah specifically tells us that one of these aspects without the other renders the animal as unkosher as if it had neither.

The split hoof represents the outward behavior of man towards his fellow, and the chewing of the cud, the inward relationship between man and G-d. If a person behaves in a kosher way only with his fellow or only with G-d, he is, nevertheless, *treif*.

• Source: Rabbi Avraham Pam

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

SILWAN TUNNEL – TOMB OF BARTENURA

Anyone who learns Mishna is familiar with the commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura. The tomb of this great scholar, who made *aliya* to Eretz Israel in 1488, is located on the Mount of Olives



opposite the opening of the Silwan tunnel.

On his way to Eretz Yisrael from his native Italy he visited Jewish communities in Sicily, Rhodes and Egypt and wrote letters describing the customs of these communities.

ONLY TEN MINUTES LATE

Question: In the synagogue where I pray every morning there is a fellow worshipper who has a habit of coming ten minutes after the service begins. I would like to persuade him to come on time but am not sure as to how to proceed. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: First try to establish whether there are personal circumstances that compel him to come late. If it turns out that it is just a lack of seriousness on his part, try asking him whether he would come late for an appointment with a president or king.

A story is told about a fellow who was reprimanded by his synagogue rabbi for continually coming late and responded by saying, "The main thing is that I came. What difference do

ten minutes make?"

After a long period of suffering the frustration of trying to change the fellow's attitude, he was surprised to see him come to services one morning on time. When asked what brought about the change, he offered a startling explanation.

The day before a fire broke out in the plant that he owned. When he quickly called the fire department he was told that the engines were on their way. As he anxiously awaited their arrival he saw one section of his plant after another go up in flames. When the firemen arrived ten minutes late it was all over. In response to his challenge to the chief firefighter as to why they didn't come sooner, he was shocked to hear a familiar refrain: "The main thing is that we came. What difference do ten minutes make?"

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CLEANING UP THE MESS

“If a child dirties the palace of the king its mother is obligated to clean up the mess.” This is how our Talmudic Sages explain the role of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer) in atoning for the sin of the Golden Calf.

This Shabbat Jews throughout the world will hear the special reading of Torah chapter about the Red Heifer in addition to the regular weekly portion. In his commentary Rashi explains how the Sages interpreted every facet of the requirements for a qualified Red Heifer as corresponding to the nature of the sin of the Golden Calf – the mother clean-

ing up the child’s mess.

After the long awaited report of the Winograd Commission pointed out the mistakes that were made during the Second Lebanese War by people in high places, it is the responsibility of those people to clean up the mess that they made. Perhaps the first step is to abandon their exaggerated confidence in the ability of even the best army to protect Israel without relying on faith in G-d.

While we look forward to the improvement of the Israel Defense Forces we pray that G-d will give it the power to secure Israel forever.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

THE TEFILLIN RETRIEVERS

When he saw two sets of tefillin in the hands of a fellow who didn’t look like he ever wore them, Rabbi Yehuda Mutzafi, rabbi of the Minchat Yehuda Congregation in Jerusalem, suspected that they were stolen property. His fears were confirmed when the thief turned violent and demanded an exorbitant price for giving them up. The rabbi succeeded in getting him to settle for a token sum and then set about trying to locate the owners of the stolen tefillin.

After some futile attempts he finally turned to Machon Pe’er in Bnei Brak, which specializes in locating owners of

lost tefillin. Just as they have been successful in locating such owners in hundreds of cases, these “detectives” managed to find the owners of these tefillin that had been stolen from their yeshiva dormitory room 15 years earlier.

This incident recalled the happy day when someone came to the home of a friend years ago with a pair of tefillin that his son had left on a bus years earlier. This thoughtful fellow explained that he has a practice of periodically looking through the lost items department of Egged Bus Company in order to find lost tefillin. In this case there was identification in the tefillin bag, which led to a happy ending.

WHAT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

HOW MUCH TO TELL

Question: In suggesting a match the question arises as to how exact one must be in spelling out the problem of one of the parties and whether one can rely on merely mentioning that there is a problem, confident that there will be further investigation by the interested party. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: In his new work “*Barchi Nafshi*” Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, rav of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak, tells a hair-raising story about a fresh bride who came crying to him that her groom had abandoned her. She told him through her tears that the morning after the wedding there was a knock on the door. When her husband opened

the door he saw an Arab who informed him that he was his father-in-law. The angry response of the newly married man was that he had been duped and he left his wife and returned to his mother’s home.

Rabbi Zilberstein succeeded in saving the marriage but the episode served as a lesson for matchmakers. The prospective groom had been informed that there was a certain issue with the girl. Since he had an issue of his own he failed to make any further investigations and thus came about the post-wedding shock.

In conclusion, if your evaluation is that the information you withhold can lead to a broken marriage upon discovery, it is best to be forthright and avoid disaster.

PURIM

History Repeats Itself

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

On 1 October 1946, after 216 court sessions, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg delivered its verdicts sentencing the leaders of the Nazi party to death by hanging. The author of the following account, Kingsbury Smith of the International News Service, was chosen by lot to represent the American press at the execution of ten of those leaders.

Nuremberg Gaol, Germany 16 October 1946 International News Service

...Julius Streicher made his melodramatic appearance at 2:12 a.m.

While his manacles were being removed and his bare hands bound, this ugly, dwarfish little man, wearing a threadbare suit and a well-worn bluish shirt buttoned to the neck but without a tie (he was notorious during his days of power for his flashy dress), glanced at the three wooden scaffolds rising menacingly in front of him. Then he glanced around the room, his eyes resting momentarily upon the small group of witnesses. By this time, his hands were tied securely behind his back. Two guards, one on each arm, directed him to Number One gallows on the left of the entrance. He walked steadily the six feet to the first wooden step but his face was twitching.

As the guards stopped him at the bottom of the steps for identification formality he uttered his piercing scream: 'Heil Hitler!'

The shriek sent a shiver down my back.

As its echo died away an American colonel standing by the steps said sharply, 'Ask the man his name.' In response to the interpreter's query Streicher shouted, 'You know my name well.'

The interpreter repeated his request and the condemned man yelled, 'Julius Streicher.'

As he reached the platform Streicher cried out, 'Now it goes to G-d.' He was pushed the last two steps to the mortal spot beneath the hangman's rope. The rope was being held back against a wooden rail by the hangman.

Streicher was swung suddenly to face the witnesses and glared at them. Suddenly he screamed, 'Purim Fest 1946.' [Purim is a Jewish holiday celebrated in the spring, commemorating the execution of Haman, ancient persecutor of the Jews described in the Old Testament]....

Streicher had been a Nazi since early in the movement's history. He was the editor and publisher of the anti-Semitic newspaper "Das Strummer." In May of 1924 Streicher wrote and published an article on Purim titled "Das Purimfest" (The Festival of Purim). In order to publish his vitriolic attack Streicher must have had a good deal of knowledge about Jewish thought and practice. However we can only speculate to what extent he was aware of the remarkable parallels

between Haman and his own execution. However, they are indeed striking:

"And the king said to Esther the queen, 'The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, and the ten sons of Haman...Now whatever your petition, it shall be granted; whatever your request further, it shall be done.'

Then said Esther, 'If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews that are in Shushan to do tomorrow also as this day, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.'" (Esther 9:12-14)

If Haman's ten sons had already been killed, how could they be hanged?

Our Sages comment on the word "tomorrow" in Esther's request: "There is a tomorrow that is now, and a tomorrow which is later." (Tanchuma, Bo 13 and Rashi, Shemot 13:14).

In the Megilla, the names of Haman's ten sons are written very large and in two columns. This is in distinct contrast to the style of the rest of the Megilla. The left-hand column contains the word v'et (and) ten times. According to our Sages the word v'et is used to denote replication. The inference is that another ten people were hanged in addition to Haman's ten sons.

If we examine the list of Haman's sons three letters are written smaller: the *taf* of *Parshandata*, the *shin* of *Parmashta* and the *zayin* of *Vizata*.

Those three letters together form *taf-shin-zayin*, the Jewish year 5707, which corresponds to the secular year 1946, the year that those ten Nazi criminals were executed.

The Nuremberg trials were a military tribunal and thus the method of execution was usually by firing squad. The court, however, prescribed hanging. Esther's request "Let Haman's ten sons be hanged" echoes down the ages,

Equally uncanny is that the date of the execution (October 16, 1946) fell on Hoshana Rabba (21 Tishrei), the day on which G-d seals the verdicts of Rosh Hashana for the coming year.

As the Megilla recounts, a decree that the king has sealed cannot be rescinded, and thus Achashverosh had to promulgate a second decree to allow the Jewish People to defend themselves. In other words, that first decree was never nullified.

Our Sages teach us that eventually the Jewish People will return to G-d either voluntarily, or if not, G-d will raise up another despot whose decrees will be "as severe as Haman" (Sanhedrin 97b).

When we look toward the place of our original encounter with Haman and see the rise of a fanatic whose rhetoric rivals our most vicious enemies, we should remember that history most often repeats itself for those who fail to learn its lessons.