

# OHRNET

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## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### ME AND MY SHADOW

*“This is the law of the Nazir: on the day his nazirut is complete, he shall bring ‘him’ to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.” (13:6)*

One of the things I’m going to have to do *teshuva* for again this Yom Kippur is watching the TV show, “I Love Lucy.”

Those of you who will be joining me in doing this *teshuva* will remember “I Love Lucy” as one of the classics of American TV comedy in the fifties and sixties.

I remember one episode where Lucy is dressed as a clown. Looking at herself in the mirror she adjusts her costume and fixes her makeup. The “mirror” is actually non-existent, and another actor pretends to be her reflection. (Could it have been Harpo Marx? Readers – please help on this one!) Her “reflection” proceeds to mimic Lucy’s every movement. The synchronicity of their movements is amazing and extremely funny.

Lucy is suspicious and constantly attempts to fool her “reflection” into making a mistake, but the “reflection” manages to move in total harmony with her. In a last attempt to expose the prankster, Lucy drops a ball she is holding. Unbeknownst to her doppelganger, the ball is attached to a string and rebounds into her hand. The ball in her “reflection’s” hand, however, bounces all over the stage. Howls of laughter. Lucy chases her “reflection” all over the set. Fade out.

*“Oh wad some power the giftie gie us. To see ourselfs as others see us!” wrote Scotland’s national bard Robert “Rabbie” (not Rabbi) Burns (1759-1796).*

It always amazes me how transparent we are. We think that nobody sees us, that we can conceal our character flaws

and blemishes. Our body language, however, our choice of words, our tone of voice, our choice of car, everything we do, reveals who we really are.

If we could see ourselves through others’ eyes, most of us would turn various colors of puce.

*“This is the law of the Nazir: on the day his nazirut is complete, he shall bring ‘him’ to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.” (13:6)*

Rashi explains that the word ‘him’ in this verse means ‘himself’. The question remains though, why didn’t the Torah choose the normal reflexive pronoun?

A *nazir* is a man or a woman who adopts voluntary restrictions not to drink wine or any grape products, to refrain from trimming the hair of the head and face, and to avoid contact with a cadaver. What was the purpose of this self-imposed abstinence?

The process of *nazirut* was a kind of therapy to remove excesses, indulgence and self-centeredness. If this procedure was successful, the *nazir* was able to see himself exactly the way someone else would see him, without any of ego’s self-serving bribery.

Thus the verse tells us that if he *bring(s) him*, if he sees himself the way the world would see him, then “his *nazirut* was complete,” – the purpose of his abstinence had been successful – who he is and who he thinks he is have become identical.

He and his shadow are now one.

• Sources: Based on the *Meshech Chochma*

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah assigns the exact *Mishkan*-related tasks to be performed by the families of Gershon, Kehat, and Merari, the sons of Levi. A census reveals that over 8,000 men are ready for such service. All those ritually impure are to be sent out of the encampments. If a person, after having sworn in court to the contrary, confesses that he wrongfully retained his neighbor's property, he has to pay an additional fifth of the base-price of the object and bring a guilt offering as atonement. If the claimant has already passed away without heirs, the payments are made to a *kohen*. In certain circumstances, a husband who suspects that his wife had been unfaithful brings her to the Temple. A *kohen* prepares a drink of water mixed with dust from the Temple floor and a special ink that was used for

inscribing G-d's Name on a piece of parchment. If she is innocent, the potion does not harm her; rather it brings a blessing of children. If she is guilty, she suffers a supernatural death. A *nazir* is one who vows to dedicate himself to G-d for a specific period of time. He must abstain from all grape products, grow his hair and avoid contact with corpses. At the end of this period he shaves his head and brings special offerings. The *kohanim* are commanded to bless the people. The *Mishkan* is completed and dedicated on the first day of *Nisan* in the second year after the Exodus. The prince of each tribe makes a communal gift to help transport the *Mishkan*, as well as donating identical individual gifts of gold, silver, animal and meal offerings.

## ISRAEL Forever

### ONE MAN WITH ONE HEART

An historic demonstration of unity took place this week 3,323 years ago. When the Torah records the arrival of our ancestors at Sinai, it refers to them both in the plural and singular form in order to communicate the message that they achieved unity of being "like one man with one heart."

The most important event in Jewish history, the receiving of the Torah, had to be preceded by a nation of millions

blending into one entity.

Unity is unfortunately missing in the Jewish world today. Differences in the level of observance and differences in political orientation characterize the disunity of Jews in Israel. Only in times of trouble do we witness a togetherness which should always be the case.

Let us hope that the echo of that Sinai unity will resound today and unite all Jews in Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

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

### RABBI MEIR – THE MASTER OF THE MIRACLE

Some charities in Eretz Yisrael call themselves the "Charities of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes". This is a reference to a story told in the Talmud about the great Sage, Rabbi Meir, who was able to ward off serious dangers to himself and others by the simple declaration of "G-d of Meir, answer me!" It is a



tradition that one who gives charity in memory of Rabbi Meir merits having his prayers answered in the merit of this great *tzaddik*.

Rabbi Meir's tomb in Tiberias is a popular site for visiting and praying to have miracles performed in the merit of this "master of the miracle".

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What is the significance of the number 8,580 in this week's *Parsha*?
2. Besides transporting the *Mishkan*, what other service performed by the *levi'im* is referred to in this *Parsha*?
3. On which day did Moshe teach the command to send those who are *tame'im* (ritually impure) out of the camp?
4. Name the three camps in the desert.
5. Who was sent out of each of the camps?
6. A person stole from another and swore that he was innocent. If he later confesses his guilt, what are his obligations?
7. Who determines which *kohen* receives the gifts that must be given to the *kohanim*?
8. What does the Torah promise a person who gives *matnot kehuna*?
9. Why are the verses about *matnot kehuna* followed by the verses about the *sotah*?
10. Why is the *sotah* given water from the holy basin?
11. What does the *kohen* do to the hair of a *sotah*?
12. When a *sotah* who is guilty of adultery drinks the water, she dies in a very specific fashion. What happens to the adulterer?
13. Before the Name of G-d is erased, the *sotah* has the option either to admit guilt or to drink the water. Does she have a third option?
14. What are *chartzanim*? What are *zagim*?
15. What sin does a *nazir* commit against himself?
16. Where was the cut hair of a *nazir* placed?
17. A *kohen* should bless the people "with a full heart." What word in the *Parsha* conveys this idea of "a full heart?"
18. What is the meaning of the blessing "May G-d bless you and guard you"?
19. What is the meaning of the blessing "May G-d lift up His countenance upon you"?
20. The tribe of Yissachar was the second tribe to offer their gifts. Why did they merit this position?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 4:47-48 - It is the number of *levi'im* between ages thirty and fifty.
2. 4:47 - Singing and playing cymbals and harps to accompany the sacrifices.
3. 5:2 - The day the *Mishkan* was erected.
4. 5:2 - The camp of the *Shechina* was in the center, surrounded by the camp of Levi which was surrounded by the camp of *Yisrael*.
5. 5:2 - A *metzora* was sent out of all three camps. A *zav* was permitted in the camp of *Yisrael* but excluded from the two inner camps. A person who was *tamei* from contact with the dead had to leave only the camp of the *Shechina*.
6. 5:6-8 - He pays the principle plus a fifth to the victim, and brings a *korban asham*.
7. 5:10 - The giver.
8. 5:10 - Great wealth.
9. 5:12 - To teach that someone who withholds the gifts due the *kohanim* is deserving of eventually bringing his wife to the *kohanim* to be tried as a *sotah*.
10. 5:17 - The holy basin was made from the mirrors of the righteous women who left Egypt; the *sotah* strayed from the example set by these women.
11. 5:18 - He uncovers it.
12. 5:22 - He dies a similar death.
13. 5:27 - Yes, she can refuse both: She can refuse to admit guilt and also refuse to drink the water. (After the Name of G-d is erased, she loses this option.)
14. 6:4 - *Chartzanim* are seeds. *Zagim* are peels.
15. 6:11 - He abstains from enjoying wine.
16. 6:18 - It was placed on the fire under the pot in which the *nazir's shelamim* offering was cooked.
17. 6:23 - "*Amor*."
18. 6:24 - "May G-d bless you" that your property may increase, "and guard you" from robbery.
19. 6:26 - "May He suppress His anger."
20. 7:18 - The Tribe of Yissachar was well versed in Torah. Also, they proposed the idea that the *nesi'im* should offer gifts.

- The range of quality in olive oil used in the *Beit Hamikdash*
- The sources for wine used for libation
- The measures used in the *Beit Hamikdash* for solids and liquids
- The amounts of oil used for *nesachim* and for menorah
- Mixing *nesachim* or sacrificial fats
- The flour or oil which rises above surface of vessel
- Which sacrifices are accompanied by *nesachim* (flour, oil and wine)
- The communal and individual sacrifices that requires *semicha* (owner leaning his hands on it)
- Who is eligible for doing *semicha*
- The concept of *shiarei mitzvah*
- Comparison of *semicha* to waving

## MITZVAH RESIDUE

“He shall lean his hands upon the head of the *olah* sacrifice and it shall become acceptable for him, to atone for him.” (*Vayikra* 1:4)

This act of *semicha* – the owner leaning his hands on the sacrifice – is described in our *mishna* as *shiarei mitzvah* – the residue of the mitzvah of offering a sacrifice.

The *gemara* goes on to explain that this act is not what achieves atonement. This is achieved by applying the blood of the sacrifice to the altar as the Torah elsewhere states “for it is the blood that atones for the soul.” (*Vayikra* 17:11) What the Torah is telling us in the first passage is that if one fails to do *semicha* because it is a mere “residue of a mitzvah” and

not an indispensable element, he achieves atonement but has failed to do the mitzvah properly.

The same concept is found in regard to the purification process of the *metzora*, which includes an *asham* sacrifice which must be waved. Here again the Torah connects the waving to atonement (*Vayikra* 14:21), but it is only a *shiarei mitzvah* since the actual atonement is achieved with the blood of the sacrifice.

Other examples include the waving of the two lambs and two loaves on Shavuot (*Vayikra* 23:20), and the waving of the four species on Sukkot. The *gemara* (*Sukkot* 38a) states that although these wavings are only *shiarei mitzvah*, they are effective in preventing the dangers of negative climate.

• *Menachot* 93a

## What the SAGES Say

“The Torah had consideration for the money of the Jews. (And therefore did not require the same quality of olive oil for the mincha offerings as it did for the menorah.)”

• *Rabbi Elazar - Menachot* 86b

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## INTENT TO HEAR

**From: Marvin**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*Over the years I have heard different requirements for the intention one needs in order to fulfill the mitzvah of reciting the Shema. Quite frankly, at this point I'm a bit confused. Could you clarify this for me please? Since this is something we're required to do twice daily, I imagine a lot of readers would benefit from gaining clarity on this. Thanks in advance.*

Dear Marvin,

This is a good question, and one that we would all benefit gaining clarity on, or being reminded of.

First, you're right. The mitzvah of Shema is one of the greatest mitzvot insofar as it is a testimony of our belief in G-d and our commitment to fulfill His will. Obviously, the intention one has for this declaration is very important.

The Mishna (Berachot 13a) discusses a case where one is reading to himself from a Torah scroll. We are told that as he reaches the various paragraphs of the Shema interspersed throughout the Torah, if he has intention while reading them, he fulfills the mitzvah of Shema. The Gemara infers from this teaching that if he does not have such intention, he does not fulfill the mitzvah. And since the Mishna seems to be discussing reading the entire Shema, it would follow that one would need such intention for its entirety.

However, in the Gemara's further discussion of this topic, various opinions are raised regarding how much of the Shema requires intention. While all agree that the entire Shema must be verbally enunciated, regarding intention one opinion holds that the minimum requirement is the first paragraph, another holds the first three verses and the opinion that is accepted as Halacha requires intention for only the first verse.

The seeming contradiction that needs to be resolved is how can the Gemara initially infer that one needs intention

for the entire Shema, while the Gemara later seems to greatly minimize that?

The answer provided in the commentaries is that there are two types of intention needed to fulfill the Shema. The former is one that applies to all mitzvot, namely the need to have explicitly in mind that one is about to perform a commandment of G-d. This applies for the full duration of the Shema. The second is a requirement that is particular to mitzvot like the Shema, namely to contemplate the meaning of the words that one is reciting. This, although ideal for the entire Shema, is only fully required for the initial declaration of faith expressed in the first verse.

Unfortunately, and paradoxically, as one becomes more of a "pro" in prayer, it becomes more challenging to maintain both of these requirements: intention for the mitzvah and attention on the words. Most of us must admit that if these are prerequisites for fulfilling the mitzvah, we've probably missed out on a lot of Shemas.

Luckily, the Halachic authorities discuss (Mishna Berura Ch. 60 note 10) that even without explicit intention to fulfill the mitzvah, if one reads the Shema in the normal context of prayer (as opposed to reading the paragraphs in the context of learning or proofreading, for example), at least in a most minimal way, this is tantamount to having the required intention. However, thinking of the meaning of the words in at least the first verse is indispensable and therefore needs regular vigilance. If one realized that he didn't have such intention, he must repeat the Shema again from the beginning.

Other more elevated intentions related to the first verse are that when pronouncing G-d's name spelled yud/hey/vav/hey, he should have in mind haya/hove/yihyeh - G-d is, was and will be. When saying "Eloheinu" where "el" connotes power, one should have in mind that G-d is Master over all forces. When reciting "Echad", spelled alef/chet/daled, he should meditate upon G-d's Unity (alef=1) permeating the seven heavens and the earth (chet=8) in all four directions north, south, east and west (daled=4).

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# QUESTION MARKET

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## AN OVERDOSE OF “VITAMIN P”

**Question:** The school in which I wish to enroll my daughter is flooded with applications and will only accept a limited number of students. My daughter may not be the leading candidate based on her academic record but I do have pull with a key member of the admissions committee. Is it right for me to use this connection to get her accepted?

**Answer:** A guest speaker once arrived at a university auditorium where he was scheduled to speak about how to get ahead in life. His busy schedule had denied him the opportunity to properly prepare his lecture, and he relied on being struck with an inspiration. This did indeed happen when he reached the door of the hall and saw the word “Push”. He quickly decided to extol the virtues of ambition and aggressiveness indicated by that word. He therefore began his talk by telling his audience that there was one element in life which was indispensable to success, and that they could discover what it was by looking at the door of the hall the way he

had done. The students dutifully turned around and saw on their side of the entrance door the word “Pull”.

Pull, otherwise known as “protektzia” or “Vitamin P”, is indeed an important element in life, and it is difficult to fault the use of it as immoral unless it is used to put down a competing candidate. The problem that may arise, however, is an overdose of Vitamin P. This happens when parents have been warned by the school of their choice that their daughter would do better elsewhere but ignore this advice and use their pull to force her acceptance into this prestigious school. The same situation arises in regard to a position for which you have been told you are not suited and you use your connections to get hired anyway.

Tragic results have often resulted from such a misuse of connections, because the school or the position has actually proved to be counterproductive. Before using the pull you would do well to remember what a wise cynic once said: “There are two tragedies in life. One is not getting what you want. The other is getting it.”

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY \_\_\_\_\_

### BUT NOT THE PEYOT!

“Come in and take a look at this child!” This was the excited invitation issued by the great Torah Sage Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, of blessed memory (commonly known as “The Steipler”) to the members of his household.

Standing before him was a seven year-old Bnei Brak boy and his father who had come to this leader of the Torah community to tell their moving story.

The terrible illness that had struck the child made it necessary for him to undergo chemotherapy treatment. When his parents relayed to him what the doctor had warned them about the pain he would suffer and that he would lose all his hair, the boy began to weep.

“I am not afraid of the pain or the embarrassment of

being bald,” he explained, “but how can I give up my *peyot* (sideburns) which are the mark of a Jewish child?”

As his parents watched in awe their son then turned his eyes Heavenward and thus addressed his Creator:

“Father in Heaven, I accept with love the pain and the embarrassment because I know, as my parents have always taught me, that You are merciful and do what is best for me. But how can I give up my *peyot*!”

This heartfelt prayer achieved its purpose. All of the boy’s hair vanished with the chemotherapy treatment and only his *peyot* remained. The hospital staff said they had never before seen such a thing and the father rushed to the “Steipler” to share with him his experience in the power of prayer.

# THE KINDEST & UNKINDEST CUT

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

**T**he Persians under Haman banned circumcision and were followed by the Greeks and Romans who did the same. In more recent times it was dangerous to perform circumcision in Communist Russia.

But in the United States of America!

Who could ever imagine that in the “land of the free” founded on the basis of “freedom and justice for all” there could arise a movement to ban circumcision!

To Jews who view the circumcising of their male children as the ‘kindest cut” prescribed by the Creator, the effort being made in San Francisco to make it a crime is certainly, in the words of Mark Antony, “the unkindest cut of all.”

How can we explain why more than 12,000 residents of this super-liberal city submitted a request to have a referendum on a ban on circumcision? Citizens of San

Francisco will vote in November on whether to approve a measure which will make it a misdemeanor to circumcise a boy before he is 18 years old, punishable by a year in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

The issue is not only whether the outrageous measure will pass in November or whether it will stand up against the inevitable challenge to its constitutionality. The broader issue is whether we are witnessing the rise of a subtle anti-Semitism in a country where Jews have enjoyed total religious freedom for over two centuries.

What is even more painful about this situation is the involvement of some secular Jews in the championing of this anti-religious measure.

We can only take comfort in the knowledge that all attempts in history to prevent circumcision have resulted in failure, and the Frisco Failure will soon be added to the list.

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